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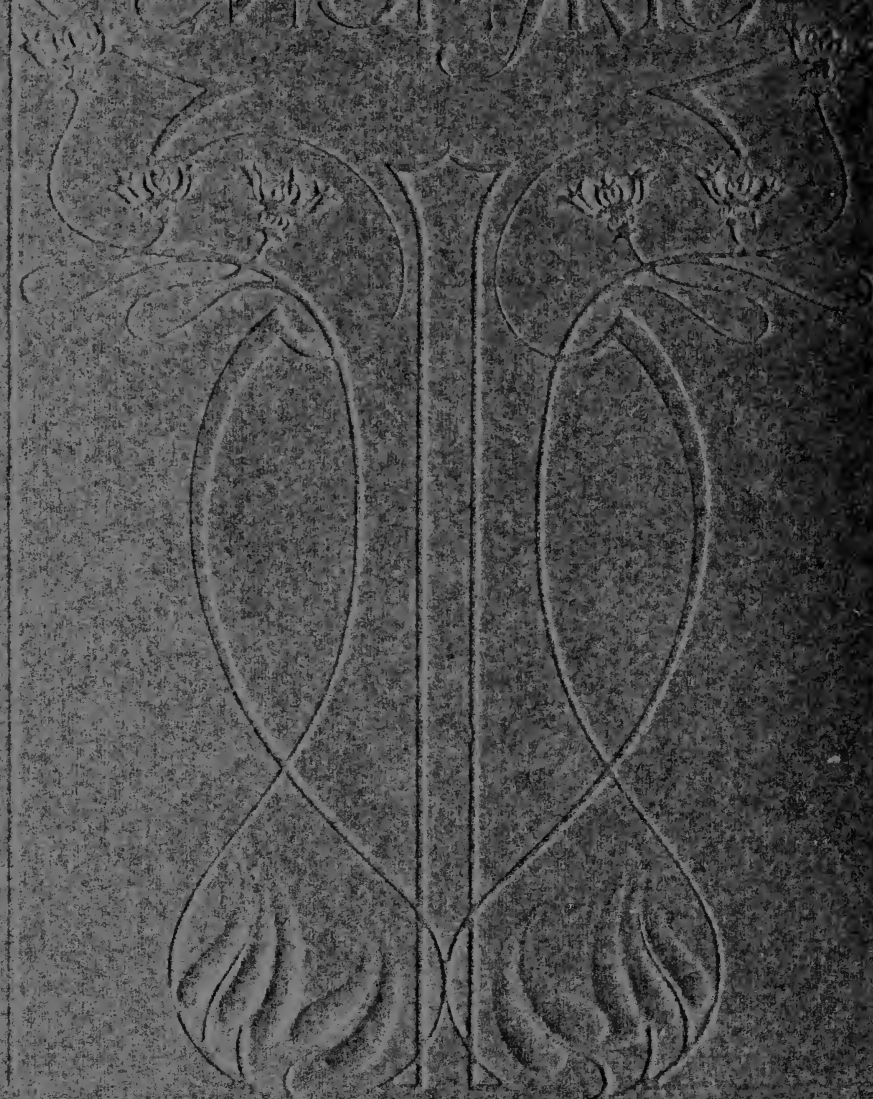


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# PAULSON SERMONS



PAULSON  
SERMONS





# SHORT SERMONS

FOR

## DAILY LIFE

BY

STEPHEN M. PAULSON



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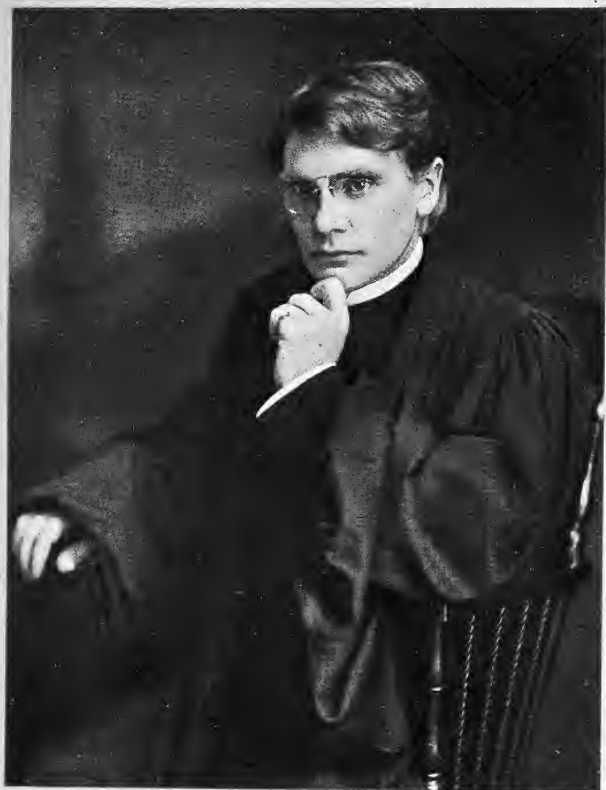
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Stephen Paulson







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# The Average Man

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He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, Thou deliverdest unto me two talents: behold I have gained two other talents besides them.—Matt. xxv: 22.

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**T**HOUGH we have often read the parable of the talents, we have scarcely noticed the middle character—the man with the two talents. Our minds have been occupied with the five-talent man who gained other five talents, and the one-talent man who buried his talent in the ground. The two-talent man has seemed to be placed there just to round out the parable. Yet I am inclined to think that this seemingly unimportant personage is the most important for consideration, because he represents the average individual. There are few persons of exceptionally brilliant endowments. Most of us are two-talent men.

Here in America the “average man” is in the majority, and some day it flashes upon us that you and I belong to that vast majority. That may be a critical moment in our careers. Up to that moment we have been so full of ambition, mixed, possibly, with a little conceit, that we believed our powers unlimited, and everything possible. We have made all sorts of excuses to ourselves for being still in a minor position. “Wait,” we said, “our time will come; we are not yet old enough; we have not had our opportunity. When it does come we shall astonish the world.”

Then one day something happens—our failure in a great attempt, the promotion over us of a younger man, the quiet ignoring of our person—and it comes upon us with stunning force that the whole world rates us only as fair to average.

Now, it is just at this critical point that the average man needs encouragement, and is least likely to get it. If he confides to someone his ambition to achieve great things, he will probably be laughed at. Sympathy for his early ambitions and dreams he must not look for. And now it rests with him whether he shall rise above or fall below that undistinguished plane of the average man. Let him read over the Parable of the Pounds and see in the two-talent man who made a success of his life, a possible picture of himself.

First I notice that the man in the parable did not sit down and enviously complain because he was given less than one-half as much as his fellow servant. He did not talk of “equality,” and “common ownership,” and “unfair discrimination,” and raise an agitation to compel his master to give him as much. No; he simply went to work with his two talents and he accomplished with them proportionately as much as the five-talent man—that is, he doubled them.

The work of the world is being done by the average man. Master minds and great leaders of men are few. The world needs them occasionally and then they appear. But the work of the world must be done day after day through all the ages, and it is being done by the faithful two-talent man. As has been truthfully said, “there is not to-day a more inspiring sight, than to see a man start in life with ordinary capacity, and see his powers grow under his faithful use.”



## The Average Man

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How shall I make the most of what I have? How shall I double my mental, moral or spiritual stock? Plainly, according to Jesus, by use. Paradoxical as it may sound, the more we expend, the more we have; the more we give, the more we receive.

Gibbon was considered an average writer—a two talent man. He worked twenty years on one book, and his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," will live as long as literature lasts. Noah Webster was not considered an extraordinary man by his fellow townsmen. He gave 36 years to one book and he will ever be known as a great lexicographer. Newton was not considered a genius when he lived; and we might extend the list infinitely, of persons whom we remember because they used to the utmost their moderate capacities.

"Thou hast been faithful over a few things," said the master to his servant. After all, it is faithfulness in little things that counts in life. Who will trust you with great matters if you have been found unfaithful in small ones? Who will make you a master if you have been an unfaithful apprentice? Who will set you a ruler over cities if you cannot rule your own temper?

Oh, my friends! let us not blame Providence for bestowing few talents, or environment and circumstances, and assert that we cannot rise to anything better and nobler than we are now. The man who uses aright his talents rises superior to circumstances. We generally think that the city man has many advantages over others, yet attention has been called to the fact that the majority of our cities are being ruled by men whose childhood and youth were spent in the country. A recent canvass of prominent men in New York city shows that eighty-five per cent. were reared in the villages and rural districts. Nineteen of our twenty-six presidents came from the country. A census of the colleges and seminaries in and about Chicago showed that the country is supplying eighty per cent. of our college students.

Let us realize as we have never done before, our possibilities. You and I may be only two-talent men, but our lives pass out of the commonplace and take on added dignity and value in the light of the things we may accomplish if we are faithful.

Jesus in His work did not pick out the men of brilliant parts, the five-talent men. His work was done indiscriminately among the wise and foolish. He set Himself as the pattern to one as well as to the other, showing thereby that He believed in the possibility of higher manhood for every being to whom God has given a soul.

Jesus was always encouraging men to make the best use of their lives. "Be faithful in that which is least. Attain a worthy and noble manhood with the materials in hand, and greater things shall be entrusted to you." With that determination go forth to to-morrow's toil and cares, to its joys and sorrows, and they shall all weave themselves into the texture of your finer and nobler manhood. And when the end of the day is come the great commendation shall be yours: "Well done, good and faithful servant. Because thou hast been faithful over a few things I will make thee ruler over many things."



# The New Year

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Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, for I have prepared the house.—Gen. xxiv: 31.

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**A**T the doorway of Bethuel's house stands a traveler, weary and dust stained. His camels are kneeling under their burdens. Laban comes and extends the invitation, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, for I have prepared the house." At our doorway at this season stands Jesus of Nazareth, in all the meekness and lowliness of a little child and seeks entrance. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Let us throw open the doors of our homes and hearts and say: "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, for I have prepared the house."

At our threshold stands the New Year. It comes new, pure and unstained from the hand of God, bearing richest treasures of opportunities, hopes and aspirations. It will probably bring some sorrows and disappointments, but it brings an overflowing measure of God's love and much happiness to His children. Let us open our doors to the New Year and exclaim: "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, for I have prepared the house."

What a mystery is Time. It is older than the mountains, and yet it is ever young. It seems at times to move with leaden feet, and yet it is swifter than the weaver's shuttle. The years stretching before us seem endless, but ere we are aware of it, they have flown like moments. A wonderful stream is the river of time. We live on its banks and note not its swiftness. But it flows on ceaselessly with a faultless rhythm and a broader sweep and a surge sublime as it blends with the ocean of years.

Time is the true leveller. Before it all distinctions vanish. Rich and poor, prince and pauper bow beneath his yoke. Time has a keen tooth. He gnaws the very rocks into decay, and the works of man soon return unto the dust. Looking out upon the desert of Sahara stands the pyramids as they have stood for more than forty centuries. They were built to outlast eternity, but Time will still be young when they are but a memory.

Another year is passing out of our lives.

"Ring out the old, ring in the new  
Ring happy bells across the snow  
The year is going, let him go:  
Ring out the false, ring in the true."

And as the bells greet the new year, would that they might

"Ring out the grief that saps the mind  
For those that here we see no more,  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind."

Long ago Jesus stood up in the little synagogue at Nazareth and read: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel unto the poor—to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Once more this is being fulfilled. Out of the sea of eternity another year is given unto us. Let us bless it at its birth. "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord."



## The New Year

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Let me write to the eyes and hearts of our younger people. Youth is prodigal of time, and the wise man regrets nothing more than the days and years which he has wasted. Remember that each day is the best day of the year as it dawns upon you. My young friends, shall this year be an acceptable year of the Lord? Yes, you say, but I am so frail and easily led, and temptations come so thick and fast. Don't give up the battle before it is fought, but determine that this new year shall see you give up some wasteful, foolish or wicked habit, shall see you wrestle persistently with some besetting sin. That this year you will take up some duty you have shirked, will draw away from some companionship which is tainting your character, will make amends for some wrong you have done, will renew some friendships which have been broken for no sufficient cause.

We are accustomed to smile at New Year resolutions because they are so evanescent. Many people at this time want to turn over a new leaf. It is pretty sure to be like the old one, blotted and stained with shortcomings unless we open the door to the Master as well as to the New Year and say: "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord." Resolutions dependent on God's strength win. That was a wise saying of Dr. Johnson: "I have been resolving these fifty-five years, now I take hold on God."

We stand at this time as on a mountain summit looking out into the future. Let us turn and look over the past, over all the way which the Lord God has led us. See how difficulties you feared so greatly have vanished, how evils which you dreaded have been turned into good, how you have been led by a loving hand like a child in the dark. Perhaps some one whom you love dearly has been brought to the door of death and saved to you. Perhaps this has been a year of great prosperity. Surely, it has been a year of numberless blessings. Let us therefore bid farewell to the old year with thankful hearts to God for his mercies, and let us meet the New Year with hope and faith and say: "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord for I have prepared the house."

And as we consecrate the New Year in prayer, let us hope that it may see peace upon earth and good will among men; that it may see the victory of justice over oppression, of righteousness over wrong, that it may see honesty in public and private office and mercy and charity to all mankind. That it may see the making of just laws, and honest men to administer the same; and that it may bring the wider extension of God's Kingdom. May the New Year bells

"Ring out old shapes of foul disease,  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold,  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

"Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be."

To you, friends, who read these lines may the New Year be a blessed year, filled to overflowing with God's goodness, a year of prosperity and of larger and nobler manhood and womanhood.



# The Gospel of Work

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For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work.—Mark xiii: 34.

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**W**ORK is an eternal law of God's universe. God blessed us richly when he filled the earth with good things for our sustenance, for our use and for our pleasure, but He blessed us even in a greater measure when He declared that we should not enjoy these things without effort on our part.

Probably every third man thinks he is a drudge, and every second woman at times is sure that she is. We are all in agreement on the subject of the blessedness of work, but to many of us our particular work is not congenial. We did not choose our calling, but were dropped into it by circumstances or came to it by heredity, as Jesus came to the carpenter's trade. With many of us the wheels of daily duty therefore, run in the rut of daily drudgery. But blessed be drudgery, for it is the basis of culture!

"What," you say, "this tread-mill which is wearing me out, this daily grind, this plod that is so wearisome—can it be a blessing? Keeping house, or keeping accounts, teaching school, weighing sugar and tea behind the counter, these overalls in the machine shop—have these things anything to do with culture? Culture means leisure, elegance, time and a pocketbook. Drudgery means crowded hours, chronic worry, old clothes, black hands and headaches. Culture means college life; real life for most of us means a daily paper and a monthly magazine. Our real and our ideal are not twins. I love books, but the clothes basket wants me. I crave an out-door life—and I walk down town and perch on a high stool all day. I love nature—figures are my fate. I am not young any more, getting gray over the ears, and would like to sit down and rest, but the drive of business keeps me going continually at high pressure."

So goes the grumble within the silent breast of many a person, whose pluck never lets it escape in words like these save occasionally of a tired evening; and there is often truth and justice in the grumble. And still, from this drudgery you are gaining culture, the very fundamentals of fine manhood and womanhood.

What are the fundamentals without which no other culture worth winning, is even possible? Attention to duty, industry, promptness, and accuracy, perseverance, courage and cheer under straining burdens, self-control, honesty and temperance. These are prime elements; these are fundamentals, and we get them from the day's task which we often call drudgery. When we were small mother had a way of harping on these things. She tried to tuck them into us as she tucked us into bed; and these are the things which nations pack into their proverbs.

Now, how do we get these fundamentals of life and character? School and college may do much for us, but these things are not on the programme, as a rule. How, then, do we get them? We get them something like the hills and valleys get their grace and beauty. Their



## The Gospel of Work

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fine lines came only by long chiselings, and steady pressure, only by ages of glacier-grind, by centuries of flood and storm and sun. These rounded the hills and scooped the valley curves. It was a work of "drudgery" all over the land. Mother Nature was down on her knees doing her early scrubbing work. That was yesterday; to-day we have the laughing landscape.

The same is true of every man and woman on the earth. Beauty and strength of character is rubbed and scrubbed into us by the daily task which must be done. It is because we have to go morning after morning, through rain or shine, through headache and heartache to do the appointed work; because we must stick to it eight or ten hours; because good temper must be kept with the children, with customers and neighbors "seventy times seven," because our besetting sin must be watched to-day and to-morrow; in fact it does not matter so much what the work may be, but it is by the rut and grind of that work, that we gain these fundamentals of character.

Look over the list again and ask yourself: Are there any qualities in the list which I can afford to spare? Not one. Cannot I get them some other way, without undergoing steady drill and pressure? No, there is no other way. The daily task is the great schoolmaster of life, and God has appointed "unto every man his work."

Here let me say to all young people that the angel of success is the angel of work. You may have given up the extravagant dreams of your earlier years, but you never give up the dream of success; for success means putting the best elements of your life into your work, and getting the best elements of character out of it. "Genius is the infinite power of taking pains," far more than it is a special gift bestowed upon certain men.

The "Gospel of Work" seems a hard gospel, but God is using it for the salvation of mankind. Let every man who is employed in honest, useful work, thank God, and let him believe that he is serving humanity and serving his God. If you cannot feel that your work is honest work, then get out of it, for then it is unalloyed drudgery. Every man should be an artist in his work, whether he paints pictures or cobbles shoes. Michael Angelo said: "Nothing makes the soul so pure, so religious, as the endeavor to create something perfect, for God is perfection and whoever strives for it strives for something that is God-like."

And surely the reward shall be to the worker. There was a little daughter of the tenements whose portion was poverty and labor. Often her feet were bare, her clothes ragged, and her hands were always hard and cracked from toil. The day came when the frail body could no longer stand the strain and she laid down to die. A friend sat by her bedside and told her of the Master who rests the heavy-laden. "But I have not been able to go to church," she said. "I had no clothes and I was needed at home. What shall I say when the Master asks me about it?" "Don't say anything when you come into His presence," was the answer, "just show Him your hands."



# The Family and the Home

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Except the Lord build the House, they labor in vain that build it.—Ps. cxxvii: 1.

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THE family is the first divine circle of society. It is the foundation and pattern of all other human society; of the tribe, of the nation, of the race. It is God's first institution for the human race. God was present at the first marriage, sanctified it and pronounced the blessing.

The family is still God's ideal of human society and has never given place to any other; and it stands to-day as the fairest possession left to us out of the wreck of Paradise. It is God's institution for the creation of the social conscience. Within the family circle habits are formed which last to the end of life and make up character, and character is formed which makes a man's destiny.

We find the subject of marriage which should be a sacred thing to every right minded man and woman, often treated in a frivolous and joking manner. The marriage relation is entered into thoughtlessly, and without due consideration of the importance of the step which is being taken. Yet there is no subject in the world which should be treated more solemnly than that of marriage and the home.

Happiness in the home depends upon one thing, and that is the right relation between husband and wife. All other things are of minor consequence. Wealth and position take secondary places as happiness producers. In how many homes were not the early years of struggle the happiest years, the years when there was perfect confidence and mutual helpfulness between husband and wife; when no external interests had entered to mar the true conjugal relations.

Let it therefore be impressed upon every young man and woman who contemplate entering the sacred relation of matrimony that "except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." For marriage is a divine institution, not only a civil contract, and its secularization in our land is an evil of which we are reaping the fruits in our divorce courts. How many broken vows and desecrated homes, how many motherless or fatherless children, how many ruined lives of women who were once pure and noble girls, how many unhappy years of men who once had hoped for a home where love and comfort might reign and where children might grow into true manhood and womanhood! Was God ever taken into account in the building of those homes? A house built in defiance of the laws of gravitation, of material and of mechanics would not stand long. Neither does a home built in defiance of the laws of God.

The greatest and most difficult of all sciences is the science of right living, and it begins and ends in the home. To the Christian family the country must look for its welfare, and not to laws and legislatures and resources. In vain you place a watchman at every street corner and at every cross road. A nation cannot be formed of men who must be watched at every turn. The home trains the men of the nation. Fathers of households are the men to whom the country looks for its strength; mothers of children are the women to whom the



## The Family and the Home

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country looks for the training of a nobler and a more Christian generation. Therefore it is that our best men have taken alarm at the great and shameful evil which threatens our homes and our manhood—the thousands of divorces which occur yearly in our land.

The history of the home is yet to be written. Our libraries are full of histories of war, commerce, literature and religion. But who has written the history of those rich affections and the virtues of heart and mind which turn a house into a home, light the sacred fire of love upon the hearth, and make the rooms to resound with the glad voices of children. Yet the history of progressive civilization is to a great extent the history of fireside affection. For the home fields are sown and harvests reaped; for the home ships set sail and return again; for the home spindles whirl and shuttles fly and wheels turn round; for the home laws are made to be just, property secure and life safe. To millions of young men and maidens in the land comes the dream of a home to be a center of peace and love and security; a home built by God himself upon the foundation of the abiding affection of two human hearts. That vision urges them to be as brave and true and worthy as the home is to be bright and beautiful and holy, for in their hearts they know that “except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.”

The whole philosophy of the relation between husband and wife in the home was written by St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, v. 22-25. Part of it some women, who do not understand it, want left out of the marriage service. It is true that Paul wrote: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands,” but he also wrote: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church.” The position of the wife is subjection to love and to nothing else. Let no man talk about his authority in the home until he has won the right to authority by self-sacrificing love such as the love of Christ for the church. It is when a man spends himself, pours himself out, forgets himself in his devotion to his home and family, that he has won the everlasting authority of self-sacrificing love. A home built in the love of God is the most sacred spot upon the earth; and as we will never find a better name for God than “Father,” so we shall never find a better name for heaven than “Home.”

John Howard Payne overtaken by misfortune, poverty and sickness, one stormy night, staggered through the streets of Paris. As he passed a house the door opened and the light streamed out into the street, and Payne had a vision of a beautiful home and wife and happy children ready to welcome the husband and father, who appeared on the threshold. That night in his empty garret with the rain beating upon the roof, Payne had a vision of his old home across the seas. He saw again the warm smile of his mother, heard his honored father's voice and felt a glow at his heart to which it had been a stranger for many years. And so with streaming eyes and with radiant face, he wrote: “There is no place like home,” and sang his immortal song of hope and of home and of heaven.



# The Thorn in the Flesh

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And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh. . . . Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities.—II Cor. xii: 7-9.

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**W**HAT different things men glory in. One glories in his wisdom and learning, another in his strength, another in his power of speech, another in his skill, another in abounding health, another in his wealth. One man glories in his accomplishments, another in being the recognized leader of multitudes, while another man glories in an easy and quiet life. I hope that every man has somewhat in his life which he feels is excellent and wherein he may glory, for we all have infirmities and shortcomings which we desire to conceal.

But here is a man who glories in his infirmities. The man is St. Paul. Had he nothing else to glory in? Yes, he says he will also glory in his sufferings. Read the catalogue of them in the eleventh chapter of II Corinthians. "Of the Jews I received five times forty stripes save one; etc." Now, it seems from that catalogue of sufferings and hardships which St. Paul endured that he must have been a man of magnificent physique. On the contrary he was a man small of stature. Not a man who would command attention by his appearance. Furthermore he was suffering from some chronic ailment which at times incapacitated him for his work.

Some peoples' troubles are mostly imaginary. Out of a passing disadvantage they evolve a dirge of agony. They imagine the smiling landscape to be a howling wilderness because they have been stung by a thistle. So physicians tell us that many people suffer greatly from wholly imaginary ailments. But St. Paul was not the man to exaggerate. His ailment was a thorn, a stake that pierced to his innermost being. It touched him in the tenderest spot because it interfered with his work.

Our "thorns in the flesh" are of many sorts and how differently we bear them. It may be some deformity or disfigurement of body, some infirmity of utterance or hearing, or it may be business misfortune. Probably all of us have a specially tender spot, and by the irony of life that is the spot which is pierced. It is the painter's hand that is paralyzed, it is the singer's voice that fails, the handsome face is disfigured, the orator's tongue is palsied, the athlete's body is maimed. Sooner or later we all come into the fellowship of suffering. Fox wrote his "Book of Martyrs." Someone wrote a book entitled "Martyrs Omitted by Fox." What an army that must be. An army of unrecorded heroes who have borne their "thorn in the flesh" without murmuring.

St. Paul's trouble was unutterable. He never told what his particular "thorn in the flesh" was. There are certain infirmities and sorrows which cannot be put into words. Superficial people fetch out their skeletons on every possible occasion. Real griefs are sacred and silent. The rivulet ceases to babble when it joins the sea. There is the silence of self-respect; one does not wish to compromise his per-



## The Thorn in the Flesh

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sonal dignity by spreading one's private affairs. There is the silence of affection; for we suffer keenly for the faults of loved ones, but they are sacred to our lips. There is the silence of surprise and dismay, when we are suddenly struck dumb by disaster, and there is the silence of necessity when the thorn pierces too deep for words. There are things which are left for exclusive communion between God and the individual soul.

St. Paul's trouble was incurable. There are people who seem proud of the magnitude of their ailments and talk about them on every occasion. St. Paul shows nothing of this morbid temperament. Thrice he had prayed for its removal, and then he knew that it had come to stay. Most troubles are softened by the healing hand of time. On Mt. Vesuvius, some years after an eruption, a moss which is known as Lichen Vesuvianum, forms on the scoriated lava, and shows the return of life and vegetation. So months and years gradually soften sorrows and bring renewed life. And yet there are certain things that are incurable. The incurable ward of a hospital has a pathos and a sadness all its own. What a different thing life is when hope is taken out of it. It is then but a waiting for the end.

I know that there are many trials in life of which we do not see the purpose. But let this comfort us even in the darkest hours, that God over-rides the wrath of men and devils to the advantage of His people. It is beautiful, in this connection, to hear Paul arguing with himself as to the purpose of his infirmity. He recognizes that he has labored more abundantly than all the other apostles and he thinks that he might have become "exalted above measure" had it not been for his infirmity which showed him his own weakness. Later on he also saw that herein lay his strength. "When I am weak then am I strong." When he felt his own weakness, then he went to the Master for help and strength.

The "thorn in the flesh" meant his greater service. Most men become greater through their infirmities and sorrows. We find that the most effective teachers of higher truth, have, almost without exception, come through personal suffering, and have thus become greater painters, mightier poets, nobler preachers. Read the letters of St. Paul and you find that he is a supreme reasoner. You find logical argument, but you also find that tender sympathy which shows that he also had come into the brotherhood of suffering. That beautiful flower "hearts-ease" grows all over the epistles of St. Paul.

Wherein do we glory? In our homes, our families, our friends, our strength, our wisdom, our wealth, but not in our infirmities. Infirmities of body we strive to hide, and misfortunes we conceal and sorrows we shun. Yet these are the things which are making men and women of us. They are making us strong in spirit, tender and sympathetic towards others, helpful in adversity and joyful in the hour of affliction. Let us also glory in our infirmities, for the jewel must be cut to show its luster, and gold must be tried in the fire, and men and women in the furnace of affliction, before they are fit for the Master's crown.



# Seed-Time and Harvest

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Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.—Gal. vi: 7.

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**M**AN has ever been encouraged in his sowing by the certainty of reaping. The hope of to-morrow's sheaves supports to-day's toilsome sowing. Even so, certainty of victory has often won battles before they were fought. Armed with confidence patriots have beaten down stone walls with naked fists.

Uncertainty takes the energy out of the thought and the nerve out of the arm. The rumor of some calamity is enough to destroy enterprise. Men will not plow if war-horses are to trample down the ripe grain. Men will not build if the enemy are to warm their hands over the blazing rafters. Men will not plant vines if others are to wrest away their fruits. Men need hope and a basis of certainty. Therefore the Divine promise: "Give and it shall be given unto you."

Let the husbandman give seed to the furrows, and soon the furrows will give back big bundles into the sowers' arms. Give labor to the vines, and they will give back rich purple clusters. Give sparingly to nature in seed and labor, and scanty shall be your harvest. Give bountifully and bounty shall be given back.

This is a universal principle. Drag one plank to the stream and you have only a narrow and frail bridge across it. Give deep thought to steel cables and stone buttresses and you have the great bridge which spans the flood and carries thousands of people. Bury your one talent, and one talent shall be yours to the end of time. Invest your talent for God and humanity, and it shall be doubled in the using. Give kindness and hospitality and generosity to your fellow men, and "good measure, pressed down and shaken together shall men give into your bosom."

We have then mentioned two elements of the principle of sowing and reaping,—the element of certainty by which God encourages man to put forth his labor; and, the element of proportion between the investment and the return. There is a third element which lies on the surface of our text. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." If you sow wheat-seed you will reap wheat; if you sow tare-seed you will have a crop of tares; if you plant acorns you do not expect an orchard of peach trees. No, God is not mocked. His eternal laws hold good throughout the universe, and whatsoever a man sows in material or spiritual things he shall reap that and not something else.

Every day men are sowing and reaping. We are reaping the fruits of past sowings and we are sowing for future harvests. But it takes so long to appreciate the principle that we shall reap what we sow; that if we sow the wind, we shall reap the whirlwind; if we sow to the flesh we shall reap corruption, and if we sow to the spirit we shall reap a spiritual harvest.

Childhood and youth are the springtime of life. In a child, parents have virgin soil in which to plant for time and eternity. The child is open to every impression, eager for every new experience,



## Seed-Time and Harvest

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drinks in every word spoken. The child is a mirror which reflects every act done before it. You are careful to plant good seed in your field. Are you just as careful to plant good emotions in the heart of your child? You take great pains to remove weeds and briars from your garden. Are you willing to spend the same amount of time and labor to remove obnoxious traits from your child's character.

Let me make a plea for the children in the seed-time of their lives. Parents, what are you sowing in the fruitful soil of your children's hearts and minds? Are you treating them with inconsiderate harshness? Do not be surprised if you reap the same from them when they grow older. Do you neglect all their higher faculties and better traits and only feed and clothe them as you would an animal? Marvel not if bitter neglect be your portion in later years. Do you speak lightly before them of things that are true, things that are honest, things that are sacred, and things that are of good report? One day they will bring you the fruit of irreverence and dishonesty, which is a disgraced life.

"The child is the father of the man," and how many men are spoilt in the making! You study for years how to get the best results from your fruit trees and vines, you study the rotation of crops, the chemical elements of the soil, the conditions of the climate and what seed will bring you the best harvest. How much study do you spend on that boy or that girl of yours? And yet there you might reap a harvest of joy and love and honest pride, with which a great wheat crop would not for a moment compare.

Were it only the parents who would suffer for the improper training of the child, we might think it retributive justice. But society suffers, and your child suffers, carrying through life a distorted mind and a stunted soul even as some must carry a crooked body.

"Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." We stand here face to face with an infallible law. The young man sows his "wild oats" and thinks that somehow he is going to escape the harvest. But it will come. From time immemorial we have had to reap the result of our deeds and no exception will be made in your case. If we had keener sight we might see that many things which we call "misfortunes" in our lives and the lives of others, are simply the result of the principle that what a man sows, that he reaps.

For our encouragement let us remember that there are no instantaneous harvests. All good things that we possess have come to us by way of the long path. And as things go up in value the time becomes longer between seed-time and harvest. The grain grows and ripens in a few weeks, but manhood is a thing so high, culture and Christian character are harvests so rich as to ask many years for ripening.

Man by his sowing determines what God shall be to him. Give God your heart and He shall give you love tender as that of a mother. Give Him the publican's prayer, "God be merciful unto me, the sinner," and He shall give you mercy as wide as the sea.



# The Festival of Joy

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Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you.—John xiv: 12.

Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also shall walk in the newness of life.—Rom. vi: 4.

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EASTER is the great joy-festival. On this day the light of Heaven floods the dull pages of the world's story. It is over-arched with the rainbow of hope and is full of the mystery of an open door to a new life. We almost hold our breath as we approach the Easter theme. A hush comes over our spirits, for are we not to witness again that wondrous resurrection miracle?

Round the world to-day is heard this glad acclaim, "He is risen!" It is a trumpetblast of joy in a world of sorrow; it is a proclamation of life in a world of death. Christ found the grave a black dungeon where the soul vanished into nothing; He left it a golden door where God and the soul meet in the name of an eternal friendship. What a burst of light through the gloom of doubt! What a response to the soul's inmost questioning and longing to live again! It softens the pillow of mourning millions. It makes Paul's declaration radiant, "To die is gain."

The whole earth thrills with new life at this time. Spring comes back, radiant in sunshine, with cheery winds, unfettered streams and flowers embroidering her garments new. And Easter, the great joy-festival of the Christian church, comes at this time bringing life to dying humanity, radiant hope to dark despair, lining our darkest clouds with heaven's glory, and ushering in a new day after life's sunset. Dying, Victor Hugo said: "When I go down to my grave I can say, I have finished my day's work, but I cannot say, I have finished my life. My day's work shall begin again next morning. Winter is on my head, but eternal spring is in my heart. The nearer I approach death, the clearer I hear around me the eternal symphonies of the world above me. My work is only beginning. My thirst for the infinite proves infinity."

It was the dawning of a new day in the world's life, that morning when the women came out of the city gate toward the tomb where Jesus' body had been laid. With woman's ever tender thoughtfulness they are bent upon kindly service to that precious body. Mary Magdalene is in the lead. She finds the stone rolled away and the tomb empty, and she runs back to the city to tell the disciples that the Lord's body has been stolen away. Meanwhile the other women come to the tomb. They are startled and awed to find there, not the body of Jesus, but a visitor from the Land of Life. "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" he says. "He is not here, but is risen. Remember how He spake unto you."

The first appearance of the risen Christ is to Mary Magdalene. With slow steps and tear-dimmed eyes she has come back to the tomb. Jesus stands by her, but she supposing him to be the gardener hardly looks up. "Sir, if thou didst carry Him away, tell me where



## The Festival of Joy

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thou hast laid Him and I will take Him away." Then that one word came to her ears, her name, in that unmistakable voice, "Mary." Quick as a flash came the response, "Oh, my Master!" Jesus said: "Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God." And Mary quickly departs on her glad errand.

It seems to us as we follow the story of the resurrection, that the Disciples were slow indeed to believe what Jesus had so often foretold. But on the tremendous question of the resurrection they were satisfied with nothing less than certainty. And when we read, "Like as Christ was raised up by the glory of the Father, even so we also shall walk in the newness of life;" and when it comes to the question of the resurrection of our loved ones and our reunion with them, our yearning hearts are satisfied with nothing less than certainty. Poetic fancies, gossamer-analogies from sprouting seeds and bulbs, intuitions and philosophizings are too shadowy to rear a solid faith on. We also demand absolute certainty and there are just two truths that can give it. The first one is the actual fact of Christ's own resurrection from the death-slumber; the second is His omnipotent assurance that all who sleep in Him shall be raised up and be where He is forevermore. Those early Christians carved on the tombs of the martyrs, "In Jesu Christo obdormivit," "In Jesus Christ he fell asleep." "Let not your heart be troubled. In my father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you." These words are the soil in which bloom the flowers and immortal hope of Easter day.

What a wonderful force in men's lives has been the resurrection. In the strength of that the disciples forgot their timidity. The fact of Easter morning was too great to keep to themselves, so they went forth preaching Christ and Him crucified. Not a dead Christ, but one who rose again. In the power of the resurrection they braved all dangers and won great victories. In that power Peter went joyfully to his own cross and Paul smiled at the keen blade of the executioner's axe. To them death was only the opening of the door which would admit them to the many mansions and the fuller presence of Christ.

If our hearts are cathedrals of the living Christ then we shall know that those who have fallen asleep in Him are not dead but living. We shall bless Him who has been their Redeemer and rejoice in the life which they are living in a more perfect world, and press on joyously toward our own redemption. God did not make man in His own image to destroy that image in death, but to bring it from life unto life, to perfection.

He lives! He is risen! Oh, that everything dead might go out of our creeds, out of our lives, out of our hearts this day. Why are you dreary, O mourner? Why does your hand slack, O worker? Why do you fear death, O man? Live new lives of hope and love and holiness. May the Easter bells ring out death and sin and fear, ring out the darkness of the land, ring in the Christ that is to be.



# Where is Thy Brother?

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"Am I my brother's keeper?"—Gen. iv: 9.

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THOSE early chapters of Genesis still keep their hold on human life. Indeed it seems as if the difficult questions which they bring up before every thinking man had tightened it. At least men have come to see, that whatever may be the historical value of the record, these chapters hold spiritual truths forever applicable to the human race. There are pictures here which never fade from our memory and never lose their meaning.

The garden with its sparkling streams and waving trees; the man first alone and then having his life richened and deepened by the woman at his side; the catastrophe of disobedience; the closed gateway with the flaming sword; the first children, and then like a thunderbolt, hatred and murder! How that scene has fastened itself in men's hearts! One brother lying dead beside the smouldering altar; the other brother a wanderer upon the face of the earth with the irrevocable deed burning at his soul, answering the accusing voice with the disclaimer of responsibility, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Very different indeed is this son of Adam from the decent, reputable citizen of the modern world from whose lips we can hear the same question which Cain uttered. But the words are the same. To-day men who should know and should care how it is faring with their brother man, refuse to know and refuse to care.

Turn for a moment to the sixteenth chapter of Luke and read a most striking illustration from the lips of the Master Himself. There was a rich man who fared sumptuously and a poor miserable beggar at his gate who dragged out existence on scraps which were thrown to the dogs. That story has often been misapplied and misunderstood. It was not because of his riches that Dives was condemned. The point of the parable lies in the words "was laid at his gate." Here at his very door was an object of compassion and charity. The obligation of help, and the opportunity of using a small portion of his wealth in charity, was thrust upon his notice. But the rich man rustled past in his purple and fine linen. And when some compassionate underling called his attention to this case of need at his gate, he answers, "Am I that beggar's keeper?"

From the very spirit of the Gospel of Jesus, and from the very constitution of human society, comes the demand that every man shall be, so far as he has ability and opportunity, a keeper of his brother man. That he has not done his duty unless, while he has been developing his own life, he has also been helping others.

Tell that to some people and it seems to them absolutely absurd. They think it right and proper that someone should do it, just as someone must dig the mines, and someone must plow the fields, but for themselves to aid in the work is absolutely out of the question. Go to some men of fashion and wealth in our great cities and tell them that only two blocks away from their doors there are poverty and misery untold; that there



## ***Where is Thy Brother?***

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are hundreds of men and women and little children living in unsanitary hovels not fit for cattle; that such conditions are breeders of vice and corruption of every sort; that thousands of human bodies and souls are going to destruction under their very eyes. They look at you in a surprised sort of way and say the responsibility is not theirs. "Go to the ministers; go to the public charities; there are societies which look after such matters, but it is no affair of ours. What have we to do with that riff-raff over in the tenement?"

We boast ourselves, at the present day, of our benevolences. We are proud of the munificent gifts which are made (and advertised) to our institutions of mercy. "There are no cripples in our streets," we say. And it is indeed a blessed sign of the times that we have hospitals and institutions for the care and treatment of every disease known to man. But are there no cripples in our streets? What hospital treats a diseased soul? What physician treats a broken life? Our spiritual cripples far outnumber the others and they fill our streets and our homes. O, that we could feel that mental and spiritual defects cry to us as loudly as any bodily ailment. O, that we could feel that the people who suffer from selfishness and ignorance, from ungovernable appetite and a craving for drink, from evil associations and a tendency to vice are a thousand times more in need of our help than the man who has lost a limb. In the parable to which I referred there were two men—the man in the palace and the man at his gate. Of the two, the man in the palace was the greater cripple.

Sometimes when we think how one change would regenerate the world, we are buoyed up with hope that the change may come soon. That men would come to believe that the man who takes upon himself none of the responsibility of other lives, is a mean, selfish, withered fragment of a man. Helpfulness is in our very natures and we cannot disclaim it. "Am I my brother's keeper?" you say, as some one points you to a man beside you who is going to ruin, and begs you to save him, "Am I my brother's keeper?" and you turn away. But as you say it you have an uncomfortable feeling that if it is in your power to help that man, the duty is yours.

No parents can disclaim responsibility for their children. To God and man they must answer for the lives given into their keeping. No sister or brother can throw off the responsibility which they bear for each other. No young man or woman who has a friend, and sees that friend losing the purity of life and drifting from good influences, but has a solemn responsibility placed upon them. By the declaration of God's word and by the very constitution of the universe you are your brother's keeper.

Let us close where we began. It is again the early world outside the gate of Eden. Abel lies dead and Cain is fleeing with the terror of the deed upon him. And there is a third Presence, and He asks: "Where is Abel, thy brother?" What right has He to ask? Every right. It is the Father asking for His child. And is not that the great final truth about it all, that within the Fatherhood of God we are to know and recognize our Brotherhood to one another.



# Thy Kingdom Come

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Repent ye, for the kingdom of God is at hand.—Matth. iv: 17.

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THE earliest preaching of John the Baptist and of Jesus Himself was the preaching of the kingdom. They exhorted repentance, because the kingdom of God was at hand. The reason is often forgotten by our modern exhorters, but it was distinct when the Saviour spoke and when His apostles spoke. Yes! and when they prayed as He taught them to pray, their first prayer was for this kingdom of God, "Thy Kingdom Come."

Our ideas of this kingdom of God are generally very hazy. But what Christ taught His disciples and what they believed was that this kingdom was to come in this world in which they lived. And when the Christian church in its simpler moments falls back on the foundation truths, this is what it teaches now, that God can reign and is to reign in this world. All things bad, mean, cruel, painful, unjust, unclean, untrue shall cease to be. God shall reign. His kingdom shall come. Just as in the heavens above planets move according to His law, so the time shall come in this world of man that everything shall obey His purpose. Why not? Man is His child and made in His image. Some day man shall come into a fuller likeness to His Father, and then God's kingdom has come.

The apostles were sent out to proclaim glad tidings. What were these glad tidings, what was their Gospel? Simply this that God is to reign in the world and that His kingdom is coming soon. In their eagerness they thought that the perfect reign of God was to come sooner than the hard facts proved. It has taken longer to overrule and turn back the forces of evil than they expected. But I do not think it a misfortune that a preacher of good tidings should be sanguine. Better put God's kingdom a little too early than put it off indefinitely far. So Paul and the rest preached that it was coming as a man might tell you that next Christmas is coming.

Into the public square of some Greek town would come running a messenger to call the men lounging there: "Come here; a man is proclaiming good news, glad tidings." "Good news! What is this good news?" What did they hear when they came there? They heard that God was going to reign and that right soon. Men who came from homes where children were sick and in agony of pain heard that God was to reign, that sickness was to be done away and health to be the law. Slaves who were certain of nothing but stripes heard that God was to reign and every child of God to be free. Men who lived by bitter alms heard that God was to reign, and that every child of God was to have his home and be protected in it. And this weeping mother and her silent husband, as they stop to hear the preacher while they are carrying to its resting place the urn which contains all that is left of the body of their child—they hear that God is to reign, that there is no death; that the body is only an outside shell which has fallen off; that their little girl is immortal. Oh, it was clear enough in those days of eager preaching what the good tidings were.



## Thy Kingdom Come

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Now let us try the tree by its fruits. These men said that the kingdom of God was coming. Was it coming? or were they mistaken? Does God reign to-day in any realm where the devil seemed to reign then? The Master did great things, but He said of those who came after Him: "Greater things than these shall ye do." Suppose St. Paul had been gifted with the spirit of prophesy as he stood on Areopagus in Athens. He would have said: "I tell you that diseases of which your children are dying shall be trampled out. I tell you that leprosy which is everywhere apparent shall be unknown among Christians. Plague and black-death shall cease and be studied only as matters of history. I tell you that the average human life shall be three times what it is to-day. I tell you that God shall forbid pain in surgery; that beneath the surgeon's knife the patient shall sleep serene. I tell you also that God means that the word "slavery" shall be a word without a meaning in this world. God also means to put an end to starvation and want, He means that there shall be nations of men who need not know what the word "hunger" means. I tell you that God is to reign in such nations in happy homes, in which no child ever feels an angry blow; in which the peasant as well as the prince may have all things that make life blessed and happy. I tell you that from ocean to ocean every man because he is a man shall have every privilege whatever his language, color or worship. Yes! and Jesus Christ shall so reign over the world, that the nations which bear His name however unworthily shall be recognized as of paramount power."

If any one had said that in Ephesus or Corinth or Athens, the cultivated Greeks would have left their seats long before the man was done raving. Yet a thousand times more than this—as you know—is already true. And it is true because Jesus Christ sent those men to preach glad tidings, and the tidings were the reign of God in the world of God's children.

Now, do not think that I have been describing the kingdom of God. I have mentioned only some of the preliminary steps in its coming. And here is the great purpose of the Church of Christ in the world—to make ready the pathway in order that He may reign whose right it is to reign.

But what of that exhortation, "Repent ye!" What has that to do with the coming of the kingdom? Isn't there something in your life which is hindering the coming of the kingdom to the children in your home, to wife or husband, to the neighborhood in which you live, to the church of which you are a member? Yes, you know there is. That is the thing to repent of. It is fearful to think out of how many hearts and homes people are keeping the kingdom—with its peace and joy and blessing.

If you mean the prayer, "Thy Kingdom Come," act up to it, work in that spirit.

"And for this pray we  
May Thy Kingdom's peace  
Come unto us; for we, unless it come  
With all our striving, thither tend in vain."



## The Value of Heroic Deeds

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Other men labored and ye are entered into their labor.—John iv: 38.  
Who through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to fight the armies of aliens.—Heb. xi: 33-34.

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**T**HIS is the epitaph of the earth's great hearts, the life-story of men who have struggled for man's freedom and progress. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is the catalogue of heroes of the faith, who believed in the universal fatherhood of God and the consequent brotherhood of man. These were the patriots and martyrs who won our first battles for liberty and handed down the inheritance of nobleness to their children. They suffered untold tortures. They were bound and imprisoned; they were stoned and slain with the sword; they were exiled and wandered destitute in the wilderness, in mountains and caves of the earth; "of whom the world was not worthy." The institutions most excellent in our day represent the principles for which these martyrs died, and dying, conquered. They were the first to face earth's despots. They wove the first threads of the flag of liberty, and made it indeed the banner of the morning, for they dyed it crimson in their hearts' blood.

It was not given unto these heroes to enter into the fruits of their labors. With a few exceptions their names are unknown and their histories unwritten; but let us who have entered into their labors, thank God for the lives of men in all ages who have set their shoulders to every form of evil and injustice that we might live in freedom and peace.

Human life is like the grain of wheat of which Christ spoke: "Except it fall in the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." All our most valued social and religious possessions are built on the lives of men and watered with their blood. The principle is that nothing is gained without vicarious suffering. Even as the coral polypes build their minute bodies into the reefs and coral islands of the Pacific, so good men of all ages have built their lives into the social structure, until it has risen above the surf of ignorance, prejudice and slavery. The consecrated blood of yesterday is the social and spiritual capital of to-day. The civil, intellectual and religious freedom of our age are the outcome of the moral courage and heroism of the past.

Do not think that freedom was born when the first gun was fired in its cause. When Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees, lifting his face to heaven in the worship of the One God, he announced to the world freedom of conscience, and became the spiritual ancestor of our own Pilgrim Fathers. For the freedom of mankind is a temple. There are great stones in the foundation laid by these early men of oak and iron. Later generations added now and then a stone for increase of height, or a turret for increase of beauty. And the temple stands incomplete, for there is still much of injustice and tyranny under the sun.

The principle of victorious sacrifice runs all through history. Jesus of Nazareth declared it a law of God and suffered on Calvary



## The Value of Heroic Deeds

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in order to save. The mother spends her strength and often gives her life for the child; so good men give and spend themselves for some cause or country. To-day we enjoy liberty of thought and speech, but some four thousand battles have been fought to obtain it, blood has flowed like rivers and tears have fallen like rain. To-day the serf has entered into citizenship and the slave into freedom, but it has been over trenches filled with the bodies of patriots and heroes. To-day our children are falling heirs to this rich land with all its treasures, material and mental. But with the lives of our ancestors and parents were these treasures purchased. Our fathers subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, escaped the arrows of savages, subdued forests, drained swamps, planted vineyards, builded schools and churches and colleges. They dwelt in cabins, wandered about exploring rivers and forests and mines, were often destitute and tormented because of their love of liberty, and for the slave's sake were slain with the sword.

How seldom earth's great heroes enter into the fruits of their labors. Moses spends his life in freeing his people from the bondage of Pharaoh and leading them through the wilderness. He is allowed to look across Jordan into the promised land, but he never sets foot there. So it has ever been. So it was with Washington and Lincoln.

Once the representatives of five great nations came together to destroy the slave trade of Africa. They met because one day Westminster Abbey was crowded with great men of England and in their midst stood two black men who had brought the body of Livingstone from the jungles of Africa. Faithful Susi told how, worn thin by African fever, Livingstone had decided to make one last effort to locate the lairs of the slave dealers. Unattended by any save his faithful black men, he was overcome in the jungle, and with his dying hand wrote his message to the world: "God bless any man who will help to heal this open sore of the world." During the ten years afterward Africa made greater advancement than during ten centuries before, and we know it was through the suffering and death of David Livingstone.

The historian Curtis says that there are three American orations which will live in history: That of Patrick Henry at Williamsburg, that of Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg, and that of Wendell Phillips at Faneuil Hall. A thousand martyrs to liberty lent eloquence to Henry's tongue, the hills of Gettysburg exhaled memories of our great struggle for the freedom of all men and anointed the lips of Lincoln, while many martyrs to the same cause poured their spirits over Wendell Phillips' nature and gave him the speech divine.

And what shall we say more, but that all that we possess of life and liberty and honor and influence, has been bought by the lives and hearts' blood of men. These men have labored and we have entered into their labors. Let us therefore honor their memories and commemorate the deeds which they wrought.

May God bless our land and all men who strive for its Christian honor and upbuilding.



# Christ in Life and Thought

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Unto me who am less than the least of all the saints, is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.—Eph. iii: 8.

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**J**OHAN RICHARD GREEN, the English historian, directed that on his tombstone should be carved the words "He died learning." All those who have acquired the greatest amount of human knowledge have felt that they were only beginners, and that the longest life was too brief for all but the rudiments of the knowledge which the world possesses. Newton considered himself a child playing on the seashore. "Now and then I pick up a prettier shell or a smoother pebble, but the great ocean of truth lies undiscovered before me." Somewhat similar was St. Paul's attitude to Christ. It was not that he could not know Him, for he says: "I know whom I have believed," but he could not know Him fully. Well may we also ponder on and marvel at the "unsearchable riches of Christ." He is the Christ of all ages; even more fully of the twentieth century than of the first. He is the Christ of all nations; yea, more of the Gentile than of the Jew. He is the Christ of all conditions; perhaps more of the poor than of the rich. If a photographing telescope is turned on the Milky Way, after three hours exposure, hundreds of stars have appeared on the sensitive plate. After six hours exposure 30,000 stars are photographed; and after 24 hours exposure 300,000. So when we turn the telescope of the mind on Christ we are overwhelmed and can only exclaim with St. Paul: "O, the unsearchable riches of Christ!"

Consider the unsearchable riches of His teachings. The temple officer gave testimony—"Never man spake as this man." A few years ago Congress issued the Thomas Jefferson Bible. Jefferson wished to eliminate all the supernatural elements. His gospel ends with the words: "There they laid Jesus and rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre and departed." But our gospels do not end that way. There is no stone against the door. Our Christ is a living, active Christ whose teaching is fuller of meaning and power to-day than ever before. The ages have not outgrown it, nor adjusted it to suit the times, but we are still striving to live up to some of our Master's simplest precepts.

Behind the teaching is a marvellous life, a character of unsearchable riches. The Bible is a book of biographies. When we write biographies we ignore or touch lightly on the faults of our heroes. Not so the Bible. Moses, David, Hezekiah, Peter, James, John, have the X-rays turned on them and their lives are laid bare. Good and evil are chronicled with divine impartiality. One life passes before us in unassailable purity; one character is without blemish—that of Jesus of Nazareth. We know about the sins of His contemporaries. Caesar said of Herod: "It is better to be Herod's dog than Herod's son." We know the sins of Caesar, of Anthony and Cleopatra, of Alexander, and we would know the faults of Christ had there been any to record. He alone could utter the great challenge to His enemies, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"



## Christ in Life and Thought

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And what a negative picture this is. I have said nothing about the tenderness of Jesus, how He gathered little children into His arms. Nor about the sympathy of Jesus; how He stopped the funeral procession at Nain and raised up the widow's son. Nor of the courage of Jesus, how He denounced the hypocritical pharisees. Nor of the compassion of Jesus, how He healed all manner of sick people. Nor of the love of Jesus, how He spent His last ounce of strength and His last drop of blood to redeem a fallen world. Nor of the mercy of Jesus, how He prayed for His crucifiers "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." I have only glanced at the glories of Jesus' character. Its full riches are unsearchable. When we read over the simple scripture narratives we find our hearts unfolding to Him as flowers to the sun, and say with George Matheson:

"O love that will not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in Thee,  
I give Thee back the life I owe,  
That in Thy ocean depths its flow  
May fuller, richer be."

The influence of Jesus has been the gulf stream of history, bringing new life and beauty and fruitage to low and degraded people. It seemed the dream of an enthusiast for Jesus with His little group of followers about Him to say: "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Me." But after only 50 generations He has a third of a billion of followers and they rule the nations of the earth. In the life time of some of you who read these words practically the whole earth will have accepted Christ.

I should leave unstated the most important truth of all, if I did not remind you that the secret of all the achievements of Christ in the world has been His marvellous influence on the individual heart. It is because He wins the hearts of men of power and might such as Paul and Savonarola and Luther and Stanley and Gladstone, because He fills the hearts of heroes with His love that Jesus is conquering the world. Some sneer at missionary effort and call it an idle dream, but out of such dream stuff we are building Christian empires in the East and under the Southern Cross. One who was martyred in the Boxer rebellion in China wrote to his wife who was in America with their little boy: "I want you to take our little boy and send him to college and send him to this very place where they are about to slay me, to preach to these poor people the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Such men as that Christ is producing all over the world, and such men are building an imperishable kingdom. Empires have been founded by force. Jesus alone has founded His empire upon love, and to-day thousands would willingly lay down their lives for His cause. If we have not accepted Him as our Lord before, shall we not willingly put our hand in His hand—the hand that was pierced for us, and say:

"I loved Thee late; too late I loved Thee, Lord,  
Yet not so late, but Thou dost still afford  
The proof that Thou wilt bear, with winning art  
One sinner more upon thy loving heart.  
And may I prove, when all of life is past,  
Thou late I loved, I loved thee to the last."



# The Silver Lining

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Men see not the bright light which is in the cloud.—Job xxxvii: 21.

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**I**N these words Elihu states a great truth which is just as evident now as it was when the ancient book of Job was written. Most men are born grumblers. They are continually complaining of what they have not, forgetting the 10,000 blessings wherewith God is crowning their lives in the occasional shadow of a passing cloud.

The case of Job was a very exceptional case. He had lost property and family and health at one stroke. His affliction seems to cover the whole sky of his life, and yet he is told to look for "the bright light which is in the cloud." With the majority of us God's blessings outnumber as one to 10,000 the troubles and sorrows of our lives, and unto trustful faith which believes in the goodness of a Heavenly Father, and even unto true philosophy the darkest things of life have a meaning and mission of love. But we do not look for it. Nay, we do worse. Even when the cloud has a "silver lining" we turn our eyes ungratefully away from its beauty to its darkness.

Here is a man whose business does not prosper. He is honest, industrious and frugal, and yet he is compelled to live on small means and to deny himself most luxuries. This is his "cloud." But he has health and strength, and at his table and fireside sits an affectionate family, happy in mutual love and helpfulness. How small is his cloud in comparison with the great blessing which God has bestowed!

Bereavement is a cloud which brings terror and darkness to many a life. The death of a mother, the death of a loved child, the death of a young man in the strength and promise of his manhood. These are dark clouds indeed. But in these clouds there is the brightest light that ever shone upon the earth, the light of God's promise of a deathless life, the light of God's endless love, and the light of hope that human love shall also continue beyond the grave. But sometimes "we see not the bright light which is in the cloud," and yet there is nothing from which I, in my ministry, have seen greater blessings flow than from the visitation of death in some households. The Angel of Death is often the Angel of Salvation.

Perhaps the darkest cloud which overshadows a human life is that of bodily suffering and continued dependence upon the charity of others. And yet there is a bright light in that cloud. Some of the most beautiful characters which the world has possessed have been forged in the furnace of bodily affliction.

Let every person who thinks that Providence has been unkind, read Ian Maclaren's story of "Marjorie." Marjorie had been blind from birth and from youth had been paralyzed. She had never known father or mother; never seen the primroses in Tochtly woods when spring made her first visit, nor the purple heather in autumn time, nor the golden corn in the field before her door. She had no kinsfolk to take charge of her, so the Glen adopted



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Marjorie, and declared in many a wayside talk and kirkyard conference that she had given them more than they had ever given to her. Marjorie saw the hand of an all-wise and all-loving Providence in everything which concerned her. As for her darkness of earthly sight, this, she insisted, was the chief good which God had bestowed upon her, and she made out her case with the ingenuity of a faithful and contented heart. "If I dinna see, there's nobody in the Glen can hear like me. There's no a footstep of a Drumtochty man comes to the door but I ken his name, and there's no a voice out on the road that I canna tell. The birds sing sweeter to me than to anybody else, and I can hear them cheeping to one another in the bushes before they go to sleep. And the flowers smell sweeter to me, the roses and the carnations and the bonny moss rose—and I judge that the oatcake and milk taste richer because I dinna see them. Na, na, ye're no to think that I have been ill-treated by my God, for if He didna give me ae thing, He gave me many things instead."

One day she confided to her elder, Donald Menzies: "There's a mercy waiting for me that'll crown a' His goodness, and I am feared when I think o' it, for I am no worthy."

"What is that you will be meaning, Marjorie?" said the elder.

"He has covered my face with His hand as a father plays with his bairn, but some day soon He will lift His hand, and the first thing Marjorie sees in a' her life will be His own face."

Oh that we could all recognize the ministry of sorrow and trouble. If we only understood, we should, like Marjorie count it our chief blessing. The silver lining is broad and bright in every cloud. What leader of men has worn soft raiment? What Luther or a Lincoln was reared in kings' palaces? It is wresting against the wind that works toughness into trees and strength into men. Supreme manhood is raw human nature plus the troubles and temptations and difficulties that chisel out character. Wine comes from the crushing of the grapes, and joy is a fine spirit distilled often from bruised hopes and affections.

I think the time has come for the Christian church to teach all its people that abiding happiness is not simply a possibility but a duty; that worry is a poison, not a medicine; that fretful people lower the level of life and breed disaster; that even over the evil of the world we need not fret ourselves, for "though the earth be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea" we need not fear, "for God is in His heaven, and all is well with His world."

The Gospel of optimism and the Gospel of joy is the Gospel of Jesus. The great promise is that "all things"—and there is no exception to that—"all things shall work together for good to them that love God."

"The inner side of every cloud  
Is bright and shining;  
I therefore turn my clouds about  
And always wear them inside out,  
To show the lining."



# The Face of Christ

For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.—II Cor. iv: 6.

**T**HE face of Jesus of Nazareth must have been a striking face. People never mistook any of His disciples for Christ. His was a face to remember. One that came up in one's memory in quiet and contemplative hours.

I do not think that any one who had seen the face of Christ ever forgot it. His friends certainly did not. People who had looked into His countenance while He did some miracle, never forgot it. And people who had been the objects of His miraculous touch surely never forgot the look of love and pity on His face. Simon, who walked by Jesus' side within the cordon of Roman soldiery, and bore His cross for Him awhile on the way to Calvary, surely never forgot the look of His face. Caiaphas, the high priest, who had plotted against Christ and at last succeeded in having Him brought in for trial, never forgot it. Pilate, who had sent many men to the cross without compunction, but never one like this Jesus, and who in his cowardly way tried to set Him free, never forgot it. The centurion who sat immovable on his horse and looked up at Jesus through the long hours of the crucifixion, never forgot it.

What did they see, these friends and foes of Christ? And what do you see as you look into the face of Jesus of Nazareth?

The face is an index of the mind. It is a dial which records traits of character and emotions of the soul. Experiences of life write themselves upon the countenance in unmistakable characters. Those who deal much with mankind in its moral nature learn to read faces with astonishing accuracy. How wonderfully the expression of the face changes with the change of life. When we find transformed lives, we also find transformed faces.

If the face is the dial of the soul, then what of the face of Christ? It was a face that drew people with the wonder of it. It was a face that defied description, for no authentic record describes it, and you feel that no artist's brush has done it justice. As His was the purest soul, so His was the perfect face. His last years, it was, no doubt, marked with the furrows of compassion, sorrow and suffering, and yet I believe it to have been in form and feature and fashion the most perfect face that the world has ever seen. The apostle looking into the face of Christ can find no words to describe it, can find no human parallel and simply exclaims "It is the glory of God!"

The Psalmist of old looking up to the sky on a clear starry night exclaimed: "The heavens declare the glory of God!" When we look out upon the world bathed in sunshine on a beautiful spring morning or when we look over fields ripe for the reaper, or when we look over mountain and hill, valley and stream, and all the changing aspects of a beautiful landscape, we exclaim: "The earth declares the glory of God!" But the most glorious thing in the universe is the mind and soul of man, capable of love and truth and honor and the highest emotions. When, therefore, the perfect mind and the purest soul



## The Face of Christ

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dwelt upon the earth people saw "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

As you turn your eyes on the face of Jesus what do you see? We have imagined to ourselves Christ's appearance, and we have seen pictures to represent Him by different artists, though none of them quite satisfy us. Hoffman's picture of Christ in the temple comes nearer to satisfying me than any other I have seen. But let us turn our eyes on Christ Himself, and what do we see?

The first scene is Bethlehem, and we are looking into the face of a little Child. It is a beautiful face and there is probably an unusual look of gravity upon it. One would say that a great destiny lay before that Child. And in that Child's face we see the fulfillment of God's promises of a Savior, and in spite of the lowly surroundings men come and pay homage to this Child as to a prince, for the star of empire flames upon His brow.

The next scene is at the Jordan. John is baptizing and Jesus comes for baptism. The young Christ steps out of the water consecrated to His work, and as you look into His face you see there the holy purpose of His ministry. You see there the steadfastness of character which no persecution nor temptation could swerve from His purpose. It is Christ at the beginning of His ministry looking out upon the world which He is to conquer and save.

It is a year later. He is surrounded by a great multitude. They listen eagerly to His parables and words of wisdom. And then He heals their sick with a touch or a word. Then he feeds them all, for they have been with Him all day. Shoulder your way through the crowd so you can look into His face, and what do you see? Purity of heaven in a world of sin; wonderful sympathy which feels with every ailment of body and soul; benevolence which would supply all wants; infinite love which embraces all mankind.

Almost two years pass and Jesus is again surrounded by a multitude. This time it seems to be a procession and is passing from the judgment hall of Pilate out to Calvary. If you can get through the iron wall of Roman soldiery and look into His face you will see there graven deep lines of suffering. You see evidences of heart-grief, and you see there written the record of the days and the nights which Jesus had spent in sorrow and prayer for the people who were sending Him to the cross. But you see also the holy determination and peace of one who is making a great sacrifice.

It is a few weeks later and we are at Bethany. There is Jesus with His disciples. But we can scarcely look into His face for the glory of it. It is shining like the sun. There is victory and triumph, for the great battle has been won; there is joy, for the great work is done and atonement has been made for the sins of men. The light of heaven surrounds him, for he is going back to His Father's house.

There are many things which you may see in the face of Christ which I have not mentioned. But is it any wonder that men when they gazed upon His face were lost in wonder and exclaimed: "It is the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."



# Hurry and Happiness

He that believeth shall not make haste.—Isaiah xxviii: 16.

**H**URRY is the enemy of happiness. Granting that the world is happier than ever it was before, let us also affirm that we are imperiling that happiness by cultivating the habit of being everlastingly busy. Our work is forever with us. Men have forgotten that they need leisure to grow and ripen. The careers of multitudes of men and women are described in Carlyle's words regarding great men—"They seem like ships blazing off shore, for the delectation of the people assembled on the beach."

Hurry is an American sin. We are the people who never have time. The very noise and din of life has so long compelled us to look around that we are in danger of entirely forgetting to look up. Even the nighttime is crowded. The glare of the lamp has destroyed the solemnity of midnight and put out the stars.

Partly our hurry and worry may be a thing of blood and temperament. If the German is deliberate, slow in his movements, ponderous and a lover of detail; if the Englishman is naturally conservative, cautious in changing his plans and arriving at new decisions—the American is swift in his intellectual processes, quick in his steps, and acts with instant and decisive energy. We have coined a new word to describe that which has become a national trait, a word that fits us as the glove fits the hand—the word "hustle."

We can understand to some extent how this active, energetic, nervous quality came to be a national characteristic. Our fathers found this new continent a wilderness. Everything was to be done—roads to be hewn out of the forests, quarries to be uncovered, mines to be opened up, fields to be subdued, orchards to be planted, farm houses, factories, towns and cities to be built. Rising up early and sitting up late they gave themselves with untiring diligence to their task. If work and hurry was the gristle of our fathers, it has become the very bone and tissue of their sons.

But there is no greatness and little happiness without leisure. Mountains can be thrown up in a day because the stones are dead and need no growth. But character is a growth. Like all living things it enlarges slowly. It cannot be hurried. There is no hot-house method of developing a beautiful disposition. Time alone will do the work. Give the violet time and it will secrete its exquisite perfume. Give the vine time and it will put a soft bloom on its purple clusters. Give the child time for exercise and sleep and there will be a rosy bloom on its cheek. Give the intellect time and it will take on a certain refinement and culture.

Hurry often destroys the very object which it wishes to attain. Christ was a carpenter's apprentice for many years. He knew that the world was waiting and dying for His redemption. A soul was passing into eternity every second, and He was aware of it; and yet He went on making plows and yokes. He learnt His lessons line by



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line, precept by precept and in the fullness of time, when well prepared, He entered upon His great work. Biographers tell us that during the first 30 years of his life, Abraham Lincoln's library consisted of a single score of books. But that poor youth, dwelling apart from men, reflected so long over these great authors that at last their thoughts entered into the very structure of his mind, as iron enters into the blood of the physical system. Alone he sailed the seas of thought with God for his sole companion. At last he stood forth a teacher, a leader, a mountain-minded man, a statesman, a voice for all that was deepest and divinest in the heart of the common people.

There is no royal road to greatness. Leaf by leaf the great oak is builded. Thought by thought and prayer by prayer the soul assembles habits, expands and grows strong. Forty years in the desert for Moses, 50 years in the hills for the father of astronomy, 30 years at the carpenter's bench for Jesus before He undertakes His great mission. Homer, the father of poetry, is blind and finds his song in silence and solitude. Paul lives three years in Arabia before he begins his work as a world-wide teacher and reformer.

The haste of modern life is the waste of all the best that is within men. The happiness that is just within reach is passed by, and instead we choose worry, hurry and misery. It was a wise word of the prophet when he said: "He that believeth shall not make haste," for hurry and worry are too often the evidences of lack of faith in God our Father.

Peace and Patience lie at the basis of true happiness. Take down your Bible and read the words of wisdom and the promises which strive to speak peace to the turmoil of our living. "Better a dinner of herbs with contentment, than a feast gained by worry," said a wise man of old. We are told that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, and why should a man of faith worry. "Be not over-anxious for the morrow, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, or what ye shall put on, for your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things," said Jesus. "Cast all your care upon God, for He careth for you." In our worry and fret would that some voice could call us back to the lost Eden of peace where God walks and talks with us in the cool of the day.

I know a lad who planted flowering peas beside his mother's door hoping that the vines would creep over it. But in his impatience he dug up the seeds to see if they were sprouting. We are all doing things as silly in our larger tasks, and thus destroying our present peace and our future happiness. It is ours to plant the seed; it is God's to give the increase.

"If solid happiness we prize  
Within our breasts this jewel lies,  
And they are fools who roam.  
The world has nothing to bestow;  
From our own selves our joys must flow,  
And that dear hut our home."



## Jesus Passing By

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They told him that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.—Luke xviii: 37.

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**I**N the history of a Jewish battle we are told how an officer took an important prisoner and gave him in charge of a soldier saying: "Keep this man with the utmost vigilance, for upon his person hang the issues of the battle." Then the officer turned and plunged again into the thick of the fight. But the soldier became negligent. Startled by a noise, he jumped to his feet in time to see his prisoner leap into the thicket. To his commander the terror-stricken soldier had no excuse to give save this: "While thy servant was busy here and there, the man was gone." Gone opportunity! And the lightning could not equal it in its flight. Gone honor, fidelity, good name, irretrievably lost! For Infinity Himself cannot reverse the wheel of events and bring back lost opportunities.

Everything has its season and opportune time. Fields offer an opportune time to the husbandman. In February the hard soil refuses the plow; the sun refuses its heat, the sky rain, the seed refuses growth. In May all forces conspire towards the harvest. Then must the sower go forth and sow, for nature decrees that he who neglects seed time will starve in winter.

Nature is full of these strategic times. Years ago our nation sent astronomers to Africa to witness the transit of Venus. A ship was fitted out, instruments packed and all was made ready for the time when the sun and Venus and the earth should be in line. Each astronomer knew that his eye must be at the small end of the telescope when the planet went scudding by the large end. Once the period of conjunction had passed no machinery could turn the planet back on her axis.

So with all men, blindness to the opportunity is failure. Inventions may be defined as great minds detecting the opportunity in nature; Galileo finding the lens in the ox's eye; Watt seeing steam lift an iron lid. Opportunities come to thousands who never seize them. Their only excuse is, "While thy servant was busy here and there it was gone."

But this is the story of a man who had one opportunity in his life and seized it. Bartimaeus was a blind man who sat by the city gate of Jericho. Years he had spent in darkness, living on the scanty alms of the wayfarer. Perhaps some rumor had reached him of Jesus of Nazareth and the wonderful things He did, and possibly he had often wondered whether that miracle worker could restore his sight. One day he heard a great commotion on the road and many people passing through the gate. He asked what it meant. "They told him that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." Then he cried out with all his might: "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." Those who stood near rebuked him, but he heeded them not. It was the one opportunity of his life and he could not let it pass. "Jesus have mercy!" and the Master heard him.



## Jesus Passing By

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If Bartimaeus had let Jesus go by without notice, or if the rebukes of the bystanders had closed his lips, he would never have had another opportunity. Jesus was passing by and in a moment He would be gone and Bartimaeus would spend the rest of his days in darkness. How often do you and I allow Jesus of Nazareth to pass by without hailing Him, though we need to cry for mercy as much as the blind man by the gate. Our lives are filled with seasons of opportunity which we neglect.

Youth is a great time of opportunity. Heaven lies about us in childhood. In Christian homes children are surrounded by holy influences. Jesus is passing and re-passing through their lives. And in the house of God where children are brought together and are singing their hearty praises unto Him, we may believe that Jesus passeth not by, but remains with the children whom He loves. In later years our meetings with Jesus seem to become fewer. Perhaps the noise and business of the world have entered into our hearts and we do not hear His footsteps; perhaps we have forgotten the Friend of our childhood days and do not recognize Him. Friend, do not let Jesus of Nazareth pass by, lest He might pass out of your life forever and you be left blind by the roadside, but call to Him with all your might: "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Seasons of prosperity are seasons of opportunity. Then nothing is weighing heavily on our minds and we are in a receptive mood. Then we are not anxious and full of care, nor busied here and there with plans to provide for the necessities of the body, and we should at such times be especially ready to receive the Saviour who has so abundantly blessed us. Jesus passed on into Jericho and there He found Zaccheus, who was a rich man and who gave liberally of his wealth. Zaccheus was waiting for Jesus and ready to receive Him and the Master said: "This day is salvation come to thine house."

Seasons of adversity are seasons of opportunity. The blind man's adversity was the cause of his salvation. Otherwise he might have paid no heed to Jesus passing along the road. One day ten lepers cried to Him from the roadside, and they received healing. In the hour of distress the Lord is nearer than we think.

Is there adversity in your life? Is it poverty? Seek from the Master those riches which neither moth nor rust do corrupt. Is it sickness? Listen for His footsteps, call for mercy and He will either lift the cross from your shoulders or give you the strength to bear it. Is it bereavement? A child has been taken from your home. It is a pure jewel for the Master's crown. Perhaps a father or mother have departed. Jesus of Nazareth has passed by and taken His servant with Him.

"Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." Never let Him pass without calling to Him and asking for His mercy and help. I read of no instance where that prayer was not granted. O Master, have mercy upon our blindness, have mercy upon our shortcomings, and have mercy upon our transgressions.



# Woman's Ministry

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She hath done what she could . . . and verily I say unto you, whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also, which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.—Mark, xiv: 8-9.

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THE Gospel of Jesus Christ is woman's charter of emancipation. Outside Christianity might has been right, so woman has held a position little better than a servant or a slave. Tell me the position of woman in any land, and I will tell you the state of its civilization. The fountain will not rise higher than its source. The hour of woman's emancipation struck when Christ was born.

Women immediately came to the front in connection with our Lord's life. His ministry was carried on among them just as freely as among men. There was never any sign of difference although the disciples marvelled more than once when they saw their Master talking to a woman. They were numbered among His dearest friends and to their homes He went for rest and refreshment after His arduous labors.

The prominence of women in the early church is also remarkable. Paul's first convert in Europe was Lydia, of Thyatira (Acts xvi, 14, 15). Peter being liberated from prison went to the house of Mary, the mother of Mark, where many of the disciples were gathered for prayer. Everywhere the women labored hand in hand with the apostles as active supporters and teachers of the faith. Priscilla instructed Apollos, and Timothy is urged to faith such as that of his mother and grandmother. St. Paul furthermore says that the women carried on most of the benevolent work of the early church. He sees a new destiny opening before them and says, "Woman's dignity depends not on outward adornment, but let the Christian woman clothe herself with good works." And that has been one of the glories of Christianity and is to-day woman's devotion to her Lord. Verily "she hath done what she could."

The most telling work is often done behind the veil which is drawn over every home, and of which the world or the church hears little, and here it is that woman's ministry is most needed and is most effective. Mothers teaching children, wives pleading with husbands, sisters leading brothers with the strong hand of affection. Christian women have clothed themselves with good works as their robe of adornment—the habit which has given them the likeness of angels of mercy to the poor and the fallen, and of guidance to their homes and families.

The incident from which our text is taken is typical of woman's attitude to Christ during His life. At His trial when few were His friends, and many clamored for His death, there was one class which was undivided, because unanimous in the love of Jesus—the women. They did not suspect Him, nor question His motives, nor spy upon Him. They trusted Him, they served Him, they adored Him. They made ready their sons to be His disciples. They gave Him a home whenever he would honor it with His presence, they gave Him of



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their substance and they anointed Him. They never vexed His heart, never disappointed Him, never failed Him, never denied Him. They sustained Him with their sympathy, wept over His sorrows and paid to Him their last tribute of devotion at His burial.

It is not unknown that men will criticise women as deficient in judgment and unacquainted with affairs. Yet we men move on the lower level, where we deal with rules and plans and the machinery of life. When we rise to the tableland of goodness and truth, men move with leaden feet, and women fly with the wings of instinct and faith. Many of the men of His time undoubtedly looked upon Jesus as a heretic, probably dangerous to the nation. Time is the final arbiter, and has decided in favor of the womanly instinct. The mighty ecclesiastics were wrong and committed the master-crime of the centuries. The simple working women were right and did their best to redeem the crime.

The anointing of Jesus at Bethany is typical of woman's work for the church. Behold the all-surrendering love and sublime devotion of this woman as she pours over him the ointment, bought with years of labor. She is a type of her sisters in all generations who have given their all to the Master and poured over Him the ointment of their devotion. Some who stood by said: "Why this waste?" and how often since then woman's devotion has been sneered at and her work hampered by mercenary considerations. There is something inexpressibly sad, yet patient, tender and gentle in Christ's "Let her alone, she hath wrought a good work." Surely, never could there be waste in the ministry of love to Him! And as a reward to her devotion Jesus raises to this woman and her deed of love a monument which shall outlast marble or brass, the monument of eternal remembrance: "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached, this shall be told for a memorial of her."

Wherever woman will put her hand to the work she is in the van of advancement of the gospel of Jesus. She has gone to work side by side with her brethren in the great mission field, in the hospital, in the Sunday school, in the great boards of the church. As deaconess she has brought into her work that tact and gentleness, that insight and sympathy which is Christ-like.

I read that the house was filled with the odor of the ointment, and to all time His house, the church, is filled with the same odor. Be it said to her eternal honor, the incense of woman's devotion rises continually from the church militant to the throne above.

And above all, woman enters into the very heart of the religion of Jesus and receives the impress of His character. A true Christian woman attains the nearest likeness to Christ. This is the truth in that old legend of St. Veronica. When Jesus was bearing the heavy cross up the steep road to Calvary, he fell under the burden, and a woman stepped forward and wiped the blood and sweat from his countenance with a napkin. When afterwards she opened the napkin there was no stain upon it, but the likeness of the face of Christ.



# Thanksgiving

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And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee \* \* and that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. \* \* \* Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, and say in thine heart, my power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.—Deut. viii: 2-3-17.

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THE eighth chapter of Deuteronomy is a Thanksgiving proclamation which comes with authority. It is a proclamation and a judgment coming from no earthly ruler or monarch, but from the very throne of God. It was given centuries ago in a distant land, but it might have been written to-day for the very land in which we live.

Thanksgiving with us has passed into an institution, and like all such institutions it is liable to lose much of its original force and meaning. That we live in a land where the President even once a year calls upon all and sundry to thank God for His many blessings, is a matter for praise. But let us make Thanksgiving something more than a mere custom and the occasion for eating of large dinners. Let us get beyond the usual Thanksgiving platitudes and conventionalities, and in a real and deep sense lift our hearts in gratitude to the Giver of all good. So I come to you with a proclamation thousands of years old from the Father-heart of God to all His children upon whom he bestows benefits.

"Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee." Such a review of life's way is a remembrance of blessing, a remembrance of unworthiness and a remembrance of hope.

First, it is a remembrance of blessing. The history of this nation is in many ways parallel to that of Israel. Our people were led out of the house of bondage into the freedom of individual national life. They were brought into the great wilderness which has been made to blossom as the rose. And God has led us by a mighty hand through wars and difficulties and great perils and placed upon us the seal of a great destiny. And surely this is God's country where He has opened His bountiful hand and poured out His riches. It is a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of oil-olive and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass (Deut. 8:7-9). God has blessed and multiplied our commerce, our enterprises and our harvests and given us wealth beyond the dreams of avarice.

But Thanksgiving should be individual as well as national. It is well for us to review at times the way which God has led us through life. Ingratitude is a vice for which no one has a good word to say. Let us dread lest even our loving Father may tire of heaping benefits upon ungrateful children. Ingratitude is often caused by an inadequate conception of the blessings bestowed upon us. Write down the blessings which have come into your life in the past year, and you will find the list much larger and greater than you suspected.



## Thanksgiving

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Secondly, Thanksgiving is a remembrance of unworthiness. Who is worthy of God's benefits? Is this nation worthy? It is known as a Christian nation, and we are glad to believe that among the nations of the earth its influence is for uprightness and justice. But we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that there are great and glaring evils which exist unmolested and even protected under our national banner. We have gained wealth and power, but the danger of our success is great. We begin to say in our heart: "My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth." We grow up with strong pride in our land, in her vast extent, her wealth, her noble buildings and cities, her endless railways, and in all her prosperity. These things are in danger of shutting out of sight God's bountiful hand which bestows it all. And after all these are only the husks of prosperity. That land possesses real prosperity which produces brave and honest men, is noted for domestic purity and holds sacred the marriage vow, whose valleys and hills are dotted with Christian homes, and gives justice to the weak as well as the rich and powerful.

"Man doth not live by bread alone," says this ancient Thanksgiving proclamation. If that be true, what a commentary it is on the condition of the present day world. It is for material things that men toil and struggle and expend their best energies. Now if ever, is it needful to thunder in the ears of the people: "Man shall not live by bread alone." "But," you say, "Look at all we are doing for the cause of science and education. We provide that no boy or girl shall grow up without at least an elementary education, and behold our innumerable colleges and great universities." Yes, but by the fruit of the tree of knowledge alone doth not man live. May the tree of knowledge and science stand and flourish forever, but its fruit is not bread for sorrowing and sinning humanity.

God has blessed this nation with a bountiful harvest but man shall not live by that alone, "but every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Centuries later Jesus announced Himself as the "Bread of Life." And still and forever the Incarnate Word of God is the bread by which the nations must live.

And then Thanksgiving brings a remembrance of hope. With what trust and confidence, with what courage and hope may we meet the future. Our God is not a god of caprice that He would bless us to-day and curse us to-morrow; that He would feed us to-day and starve us to-morrow. He has set our lives in a land of abundance, He has been our strength and defence and given us songs in the night of trial. And we look forward with the hope that in the deepest sense of the word this nation may some day become God's chosen people for the spreading of liberty and Christianity throughout the world.

And surely we should be a thankful people lifting hearts full of gratitude to a loving Father, not once a year, but every day in the year. And let our thanksgiving not be only empty words, but let us strive to acquire the Master's method of giving thanks. He "went about doing good."



## The Weak Spot

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This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and arms of silver, his belly and thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.—Dan. ii: 32-33.

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**S**UCH was the image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream. It was a fine image to look upon, magnificent in its proportions. Its head of fine gold towered high in the air. Its breast and arms of silver, its thighs of brass, its legs of brass and iron spoke of beauty and strength, and one might have seen that image many times without noting its weak point. It, however, had its weak point. Its feet were partly of iron and partly of clay. And a stone was loosed from the hillside and rolled against the clay feet and the image toppled over and was broken to pieces.

The story of this image is a parable true to life. We all have our weak spots. A man has built up a fine character; he has an intellect like fine gold, accomplishments like purified silver, the strength of welded brass and iron. But all this noble superstructure is supported on clay feet. We marvel some times at the sudden downfall of an honored and upright man. His friends and the community are shocked that he has proven so weak, in whom they trusted. Temptation has a fatal knack of picking out our weak spots. Satan tries every part of our character until he finds the clay feet. Think for a moment how it has been in your own experience. There is one besetting sin against which you have striven, one flaw in your character of which you are conscious and which you have tried to guard, there is one weak spot where temptation assails you and where you are so often overcome.

Ahab, King of Israel, went into battle fully armed and confident. He had on his trusty helmet, and breastplate and greaves and a shield was carried before him. Ahab knew that there were joints in his armor, but he thought them too small to be of any consequence. But a man in the opposite camp drew a bow at a venture. His arrow was aimed at nothing in particular, but it smote the King of Israel between the joints of his armor and Ahab died from the wound. Think where the flaw is in your armor. Many a man has gone to the battle confident in his own strength and been laid low by some chance temptation. There is probably some part of your nature that should be covered with a double plate of steel.

Scientists at different times have given considerable attention to the study of immortality. Darwin has given probably the most adequate scientific definition of immortality. He says it is perfect correspondence to a perfect environment. But every human body has some constitutional weakness, a tendency to some disease, which, gradually gaining the upper hand, results in death. In the same way we have within us a tendency to some sin, a constitutional weakness of character which needs careful guarding.

Achilles, the son of Peleus, King of Myrmidons, was the hero of the Trojan war. When a child, his mother, Thetis, in order to make him invulnerable, dipped him in the river Styx. Every part of him was covered with the water except the heel by which she held him.



## The Weak Spot

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During that great war, arrows and swords and spears had no effect on the body of Achilles. But one day he was going about the walls of Troy and a soldier threw a spear at him. It struck Achilles on the heel which his mother had held when she dipped him in the Styx, and the wound caused the death of the hero.

In the history of mankind there are no immortal heroes. Whether it be clay feet, or whether it be joints in the armor or whether it be the heel of Achilles, they all have their weak spots which pronounce them human. The whole Bible recognizes this human frailty, and continually warns us. Jesus, speaking of His intimate knowledge of human nature, says: "The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak." You say, "that fits my case exactly. I have wrestled with my besetting sin, I have striven sincerely to overcome it, I have prayed for strength and my spirit desires purity and uprightness, but temptation continually finds the clay feet." The disciples wished to stand by Jesus in the hour of trial, they desired to watch with Him in Gethsemane, they thought that denial of Him would be the last sin that would overtake them. Jesus, knowing their hearts, says: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."


St. Paul, speaking out of his own experience, says: "Take the whole armor of God; take the helmet of salvation, and the breastplate of righteousness, and the shield of faith, and have your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace, and have your armor girt about you with the girdle of truth, and in your hand take the sword of the Spirit." You will note that in this catalogue of the Christian's armor everything is for defence except the sword of the Spirit. And so the word of God recognizes that every part of man's nature must be carefully guarded. Speaking further out of his own personal experience, St. Paul says: "My strength was made perfect in weakness." That seems a paradoxical statement. Paul thought he was a strong, self-sufficient man relying wholly on his own wisdom and judgment and strength. One day he found out that he was very weak, and he went to the Master for strength. Telling about it afterwards he says: "When I am weak, then am I strong." That is, when he recognized his own weakness he went to God for strength and that is the strength that holds.

There was a blind man who sat in the gate of Jericho. He heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing and he cried out: "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me," and the Master's strength went out towards the blind man's weakness and he received his sight. Jairus had an only daughter whom he loved better than his life. He knew that she was beyond human help, so in his despair he sought Jesus and said: "Come and lay Thy hand upon her and she shall live." Jesus came and lifted her into life. You have one life and one soul. It is the most precious thing you possess. The whole world with its wealth cannot buy your soul's salvation. But you can go to the Fountain of life and strength and say: "Master, Thou knowest my weakness, but in Thy power I shall be made strong."



# Helping or Hindering

He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.—Matthew xii: 30.

 HE peril which threatens Christians and Christianity is the peril of indifference. We are living in an age of toleration. We have ceased to desire to force our particular views upon other people save by methods of persuasion. Torture and excommunication are things of the past.

I believe that there cannot be too much toleration. No man has a right to usurp the judgment throne of God and pass sentence upon his fellow men. But is it not true, nevertheless, that this atmosphere of freedom in which we draw our breath has made us rather indifferent to religious truth? And while we would by no means compel belief as the church once tried to do, yet we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the old days of persecution were the days of purity of faith. The Church of Christ persecuted, has been the Church of Christ pure. The Church of Christ patronized has always become the Church of Christ impure. When Constantine the emperor espoused the cause of Christianity it was one of the saddest days for the church, and wherever it has held a position under the wing of the state, there has passed upon it the most blighting influence which has ever touched the church.

When men and women had to face death for the things that they believed, they were earnest and their faith was pure. Men and women who were not prepared to do this kept outside the Church of Jesus Christ. But all that has passed away. No one will persecute you now for being a Christian, and so the danger which threatens us to-day is the danger of indifference.

Now, when we come with our indifference into the presence of the Master, He pronounces sentence upon us immediately in unmistakable terms. He makes a clean line of demarkation, setting some people on one side of that line and some upon the other. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." One can imagine that the words fell from the lips of Jesus quietly and calmly, and yet it is a sharp-edged sword dividing men swiftly and surely into two opposite camps leaving no "via media," no neutral ground.

Did you ever think how our division and God's division of humanity differ? We divide generally into three classes; God into two. We say, upper, middle and lower classes; God says: "These are with me, these are against me." Our division is horizontal. We think of men, as it were, in layers one above another. God's division is perpendicular; some on the right side and some on the left.

Of late years we have heard much of the "solidarity of humanity." It is one of these phrases which sounds as if there were a good deal in it and men have made the most of it. "The solidarity of humanity"—what do writers and speakers mean by it? It means that humanity is not a conglomeration of units, each separate and alone, but that humanity is one; that all men are dependent upon all other



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men. Every nation of the world is linked to every other nation. Every generation has a vital relation to every other generation. The child is heir of all the ages which precede it. This is God's thought for the human race: "He hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth." This was the ideal of humanity upon which Jesus based all His work and teaching.

But it seems as if this ideal were far from being realized. Humanity is broken up, split, divided. Even the nations of Europe, which are supposed to be civilized, Christianized nations, watch each other with suspicion, armed to the teeth. Then when you come to the church do you get any comfort out of the divisions in the Church of God? I hope not. God's ideal never was that His people should be a divided people. Come down into private life, and we are looking to-day upon one of the saddest sights, the break-up of the home. Children are growing away from their parents and parents away from their children; the old strong bands which make a strong people because they are strong in family relationships, are passing away.

The Master announces Himself as the Gatherer of God's people. And how we need the Gatherer! How we need to enter into that larger ideal that we are one the world over; that every man with the image of God upon him and the breath of God in him, is a brother man to be loved, and served, and cared for. And Jesus says furthermore that you and I are either helping or hindering Him in that work—that we are either gathering or scattering.

So many of us try to be neutral. "I do not know that I am helping the work of the church and the cause of Christianity much," you say, "but then, I am not hindering it." Yes, you are. To do nothing is to be a hindrance. You have been on the busy thoroughfare of a great city. Suppose you stop in the middle of the sidewalk and look in a window. You are not there long until a man in blue puts his hand on your shoulder and says: "Move on." "Why should I move on? I am not interfering with anyone." "You are blocking the traffic," he says, "you can go this way or that way, but you cannot stand still."

No, my friends, you cannot stand still. The moment you stand still and say: "I am just going to be an interested onlooker," you become an obstacle in His way of progress. If you stand, someone else will stand, too. If you are not with Him you are against Him. What the Master wants to-day in the cities and villages of America, are men and women who are living with Him, and gathering with Him. Let parents begin in the home. America is waiting for the manifestation of the sons and daughters of God, to become part of the great force which is gathering men together.

What we want is for men and women to choose their side. Do not say "It is no use for me to pretend to take sides with Christ, I can do so little." It is not any extra activity which you may engage in, but it is your life that helps or hinders Him, and it is your life that He wants.



# The Dreamer and His Dreams

Behold, this dreamer cometh.—Gen. xxxvii: 19.

**L**IKE all the world's great hearts, Jesus of Nazareth was looked upon as a dreamer. People in His day had not learnt to look upon their dreamers and their dreams as their best possessions, but in this age of the world we have begun to recognize that the dreams of to-day are the sureties of the future. The institutions of to-day are the fruits of the aspirations of yesterday. Because the young Galilean went about doing good and spoke those parables and apothegms which idealize brotherhood and the sanctity of human life, we have the best Christian civilization of the present day.

Our text is from the history of Joseph. The life of Joseph is a beautiful illustration of God's providential leading, of His use of individual lives for great and hidden purposes, and of His turning the evil which men perpetrate into good. Between the life of Joseph and that of Christ there is a striking parallelism. Like Joseph, Jesus was His Father's well beloved Son, like Joseph, Jesus was the best of brothers, yet hated and respected by His own; like Joseph, Jesus was sent by His Father to His brethren, and from hate and envy sold for a few paltry pieces of silver. Alike, they endured a great temptation without sin. Joseph became the saviour of those who had sold him, so Jesus became the saviour not only of Israel but of the whole world.

We see how close is the parallelism; and like Joseph, Jesus was considered a dreamer. Some looked upon His dreams as idle but harmless; others thought to take good care that His dreams should not come true. We can well believe that as Jesus passed along the streets in Jerusalem people, seeing Him coming, smiled derisively, and said: "Behold this dreamer cometh." Now we look upon these dreams every day being fulfilled. We see them as the greatest realities which the whole world knows, we see them as the hope and prayer of every right-minded person.

Christ came with a dream of a kingdom. They wanted a kingdom, but something more substantial than that which he promised. His kingdom was not based on nationality, territorial boundaries, race, tongue or color. His kingdom was to be universal as mankind. Its laws were not written on statute books nor enforced by police and courts of law; but written on the hearts of men, and enforced by their own consciences. "My kingdom is not of this world," said Jesus to Pilate, and Pilate smiled to himself and thought, "Not a very dangerous rival to the great Roman Empire."

He came with a dream of His own kingship. They wanted a king. One who would oust Herod and throw off the Roman yoke. They wanted a mighty man of valor like David; one celebrated for his wisdom and magnificence like Solomon. But Jesus wanted no palace overlooking the Temple hill in Jerusalem, no summer palace on the shores of Tiberias. He wanted no court of attendants where sycophants



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phants might seek favor. He was not to be a king of the Jews only, lording it over tributary tribes and nations; but His kingship was to be as universal as His kingdom, a king of the South Sea Islanders as well as of the Jewish Sanhedrin, a king wherever God's will should be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

He came with a dream of universal brotherhood. They desired a united and knit-together Israel, that they might stand against their foes and be effectually aggressive. But His dream of brotherhood was such that a man might recognize a brother in spite of tongue, color, customs, tastes and conditions. A brotherhood where allegiance and love to the same Master should always be a strong link, where the helping hand should always be outstretched, where the love of our fellowman should rule our conduct. Paul had grasped that idea of brotherhood when he wrote: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

He came with a dream of universal fatherhood. We have Abraham for our father," said the Jew, "we are the people of the covenant, the chosen people of God. God is the God of the Jew and all others are outsiders." But Jesus announced the universal fatherhood of God. Glorious conception! God is not the God of one nation or one class; not only of the rich or the poor, or of the wise, or the ignorant, but of all people. Every one has access to Him. And see how the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man are inseparable. We are all children of the same Father, and it is not seemly that there should be strife and contention and hatred and malice and bitterness among brethren. This ought to rule our whole life and conduct, to deal with people as we would with a brother or a sister. We acknowledge God's Fatherhood and our brotherhood when we bow our heads and pray, "Our Father."

"Behold this dreamer cometh," and His dreams, those ideals which lived in the Master's mind have become realities. His kingdom is indeed a universal kingdom. Every year sees its boundaries widen. The continents and the islands of the sea have become parts of that mighty empire. They crown Him King in the tropics, in the Arctic regions, in the East and the West. Vows of fealty are taken to Him in every language under heaven. Every year the Fatherhood of God is better understood and acknowledged. We are losing unworthy conceptions of God and learning His goodness and His father-love to mankind. And, therefore, the brotherhood of man progresses also. There is still strife among brethren and great questions which face us like the questions between labor and capital. But never in the world's history has so much been done to bring about amicable relations between man and man.

O, Thou Dreamer of Galilee, may Thy Kingdom widen its borders and Thy Kingship increase its sway; may the Father-love of God fill the earth and sway the hearts of men toward a universal brotherhood.



# The First Christmas Carol

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O sing unto the Lord a new song, for He hath done marvellous things.—Ps. xlviii: 1.  
Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.—Luke ii: 14.

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CHRISTIANITY came in with a song. It was performed in God's great cathedral and the dome thereof was hung with the twinkling lamps of God's architecture.

Christianity came in with a song. It was the carol of the Nativity and it gave birth to a world of singing. There was not much song in the world before Christ came, and there is not much to-day, where Christ is unknown. The children of the heathen are silent children, for the joy of the Christmas carol has never set their hearts and voices singing. That first Christmas carol was heard only by the shepherds on the Bethlehem plains, but the world thrilled to the song, for the Consolation of Israel had come.

Christianity came in with a song. I wish I could tell you the story of the Christmas carol, how it has gone about the world and brought peace and happiness wherever it has come. It is a wonderful story which has never been written, the story of man's life, of his sin and his restoration; a story of mighty conquests with minor strains which tell of martyrs to the faith. It is the story of Christianity, for it began with the announcement of Christ's birth.

Long ago when Christianity was in its infancy and Christians were a persecuted sect, they hid from their enemies in the catacombs under the city of Rome. In the dreary underground passages they held their worship and sang with joy their Christmas carol despite their hardships and persecutions. It seemed that their own troubles intensified their love to the Master who came in lowliness and poverty as a little Child.

Europe was filled with wild tribes of barbarians which dismembered and overthrew the great Roman empire. They in turn were conquered and subdued not by sword or spear, but by the simple story of the Child in the manger of Bethlehem and the song of the angels on that night. Then the Christmas carol came into the far North and made a season of joy in the midst of the dull winter days and long nights. The holly and the fir tree and the yule-log were brought in as of old, but that ancient festival had been embraced by God's love and life, and the song that sounded through the stormy winter night was the carol of the Nativity. "Glory to God in the Highest."

Centuries later the Christmas carol came to a new world. The staunch ship which carried it weathered the storms of many months, and at last the sturdy pilgrims landed on the coast of the new world. They braved many dangers, subdued the forests, built their cabins and set up their family altars. Then the Christmas carol rang forth in this new land, gave them courage in their hardships, sweetened their toil, and saved a continent for Christ. And there would be still more wonderful things to relate if the story of the Christmas carol were written. How men have gone single-handed among savages, not protected by armor nor carrying weapons, and have con-



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quered their evil hearts with the story of the Christ-Child, and they also have joined in the great world-chorus which sings the Christmas carol. O, it is a song of joy, and of peace and of victory. It is a song of God's love, who gave His Son, and a song of hope for the future of mankind.

"I heard the bells on Christmas day  
Their old, familiar carols play,  
And wild and sweet  
The words repeat  
Of peace on earth, good will to men!  
And thought how, as the day had come,  
The belfries of all Christendom  
Had rolled along  
The unbroken song.  
Of peace on earth, good will to men!"

But there is another sound that seems at times to drown out the song, for the Christmas carol is not yet wholly victorious. It is the tumult of men's hate which seethes as a raging cauldron. There is the sound of curses and of carnage and of men groaning under the heel of the oppressor. There is the sound of great wars which bring terror and death and sorrow to thousands, for the "Peace" of the Christmas song is not as yet universal.

"It was as if an earthquake rent  
The hearthstones of a continent."

And on all sides we still hear the lamentation of the broken hearted, the cry of the sin-laden, of the sick and in prison. Evil and hate are still strong in men's bosoms, and misery is before our eyes continually. And in the hour of our despair we cry:

"Hate is strong  
And mocks the song  
Of peace on earth, good will to men!"  
Then pealed the bells more loud and deep  
"God is not dead; nor doth He sleep!  
The Wrong shall fail  
The Right prevail  
With peace on earth, good will to men!"

And with the bells we hear a quiet voice which speaks with insistence: "I have come to bind up the broken hearted, to give deliverance to the captive, sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are bruised, to lift the burden of sin and sorrow from humanity and to give them songs in the night. I have come to bring peace and charity and good will among men, and the time shall be when they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." And as we hear those words of the Prince of Peace, we begin to understand that tumults and wars, hate and contention, oppression and sin, are only discords which one day shall blend into harmony with the Peace Song of the Son of God.

Blessed be the Christmas season with its song and story and its Love-Gift from the Father's heart. And blessed be the Christmas carol with its song of peace, of the home and of the fireside. It is an old song, yet ever new for the Christ-Child is yearly becoming dearer to our hearts, and the song gains new depth and meaning. Let us all learn to sing it fervently, joyfully: "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men."



# Walking With God

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And Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him.—Gen.v: 24.

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THIS fifth chapter of Genesis is like an ancient burial place with only the names and the ages on the tombstones, and the brief epitaph, "He died." This is a chapter of non-entities. They left no just and glowing memorial behind them. They left no trace of goodness or virtue. Their lives were not felt and their deaths were not lamented. They dropped no quickening words which lived like music in the lives of their descendants. They lived like the common run of selfish people. The earth was made for their special gratification; the sun shone and the rain descended to bless their fields. They lived passive and useless lives and in such a world of ours that is no small sin.

Remember, that in our Lord's picture of the judgment some are condemned not because of any great crime which they had committed but because of the good that they had omitted to do. "I was an hungered and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. And verily I say unto you inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me." Some people in this world are blots upon humanity, some are blanks, and some are blessings. The first two our Lord writes in the same condemnation.

There is no blank in this world without a corresponding blessing; there is no barren spot which does not in some way indicate a brighter and a better state. Hence we find in the midst of this chapter of blanks one huge blessing: "Enoch walked with God." Here is a plant growing in the desert, an evidence of influence from the sky. Mungo Park traveling in the African desert, overcome by hunger and thirst lay himself down to die. Under him was the burning sand; over him the hot, brassy sky. But his eye lighted on one tiny flower. The sight revived his hopes, for he argued with a logic which was irresistibly conclusive, "If God takes care of this flower in the desert, He cannot have forgotten me." That was strictly and beautifully true. The moisture from distant oceans had come to refresh it; the chemistry of a soil not utterly exhausted nourished it, and God's smile gave it its tints, and God's breath gave it fragrance. That flower in the midst of the burning sands was an evidence to Park that God was there. So here an Enoch walking with God was a flower in the midst of the barren desert—an evidence that God was there though the world knew it not.

There never was a desert in which there was not a flower; never a night without its star; never in the history of the world a century so barren that there was not some one who adorned it by his virtues, or contributed to it by his learning and his goodness. In those far-off ages among the Methuselahs and Lamechs and Cains, we find an



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Enoch. In the dark hour of Jewish history when Jesus came, we find a Simeon and an Anna awaiting Him in the temple.

"Enoch walked with God." No Christian biography could be more complete, more eloquently descriptive. If Enoch walked with God, he must have believed in Him as the Father of mankind. He must have recognized His goodness and His love in the world about him and been grieved at the wickedness which he saw every day.

And Enoch must have agreed with God. If two people differ politically, morally, religiously, unless they have extremely good and sainted tempers they cannot walk long together in friendship and peace. Differences of opinion lead to differences of conduct. The instant you begin to differ from God, you begin to say: "Well, I like this and God condemns it; I don't like that and God commands it." Then you depart from God, "for how can two walk together unless they be agreed."

But agreement with God must not only be in mind, but in heart. Differing from another intellectually is endurable, but when we differ from another in heart and feeling there is a quarrel. Now, the human heart, Scripture tells us, is "enmity against God." This enmity must be dissolved, and love, the only bond between earth and heaven, must take its place. You may know all theological disputes which have stirred the world, you may know all creeds and confessions and yet not one truth may be lodged in your heart as a living and a saving force. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God," said Jesus, and the great word stands.

Enoch must have had perfect confidence in God. A soldier will not march to battle unless he has confidence in his commander. A sailor will not go to sea unless he has confidence in his captain. A patient will not undergo an operation unless he has confidence in the surgeon. A Christian will not be faithful and true and endure unto the end unless he has confidence in God. He who walked with God may have trials, sorrows, afflictions, but he never despairs, for he says: "God is my refuge and strength," and He has said: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." He recollects these beautiful promises, pleads them in prayer and feels the weight and force and consolation of them in time of difficulty, and in the fullness of trust he says with St. Paul: "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Note how different Enoch's end is spoken of from that of the others mentioned in this chapter. "Enoch was not, for God took him." One day his place was empty and men drew their own conclusions. He had been the friend of God. Where should he be but in God's dwelling place. "God has taken him," they said, and their thoughts followed upward and essayed to conceive of the final bliss of the man who had walked with God.



# Growing Old

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We all do fade as a leaf.—Isaiah lxiv: 6.

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THE year is growing old in beauty and in peace. One perfect day follows another; but there is a chill in the air, and white frost of mornings which prophesies the coming winter. The leaves ripen and fall, but first they put on robes of marvelous beauty. There is a bluer haze upon the mountains and a yellower tinge to the sunshine. The year is growing old. It is an art to grow old gracefully. Those who are approaching the autumn of life should know two things well:

How to hold on. Usefulness is not over at life's meridian, the Oslerites to the contrary notwithstanding. You may have the most effective years of your life before you. Caesar planned his victorious campaigns after he was fifty. Milton wrote his "Paradise Lost" after he became old and blind. Bismarck and Gladstone did mighty work when their hair was white as snow. What strength and wisdom built on mature experience, have come from the lips and pens of many men when the shadows were lengthening toward the sunset.

How to let go. Old Simeon knew how when he said: "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." Paul knew how when he wrote: "I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." The man who has lived well is not afraid to let go of life.

An autumn walk through the forest reveals indescribable beauty. No artist can paint it; no poet can sing it. Well lived lives also come to their beauty in the autumn. In youth the beauty is on the outside and often hardly skin-deep. In old age it is beauty of character and beauty of soul, and it shines out through the countenance. Leaves do not fall because they are frost-bitten, as is commonly supposed, but because they are ripe and ready for falling. So our lives ripen in the years which God has given us, and then the great Reaper comes and gathers us into His sheaves. The soil furnishes the leaf with silica for its framework; all else comes from the air and the sun. So our life, our real life, which is spiritual in its nature comes from above. No chill of autumn winds can reach the soul. The framework, the body, departs to its native soil, but that which the framework holds merges into the realms of eternal life.

It is an art to grow old cheerfully. Holmes wrote:

"And if I should chance to be  
The last leaf upon the tree  
In the spring,  
Let them smile, as I do now,  
At the old forsaken bough  
Where I cling."

Who has not been charmed and cheered by that brief period of balmy weather known in Canada and the Northern States as Indian summer? There is something strangely attractive in these few, short, tranquil days of late autumn, coming as they often do between a



## Growing Old

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period of tempestuous weather and the commencement of the frosts. The face of nature is still sunny and bright and beautiful. There is the rich tinge of the broad, red sun blending the thousand hues of hill and forest and lake, and then there is the gorgeous autumnal sunset closing the short day.

Some people grow old like that. They have their Indian summer. There is about them the peace and tranquility of another world, and the quiet cheerfulness which looks upon the evening of life with few regrets.

It is an art to grow old sturdily. A healthy tree loses its leaves but it stands the blasts of winter uninjured. A robust old age stands on the record of a clean-lived youth. Shakespeare makes one of his old men say:

"Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty;  
For in my youth I never did apply  
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood;  
Nor did with unbashful forehead woo  
The means of weakness and debility;  
Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,  
Frosty, but kindly."

There is scarcely a more pitiful sight under the sun than helpless and dependent old age; when the powers of the body are gone and aches and pains make the weary hours a torture; when the powers of mind have become dulled and childish, and when memory is only a sigh of regret for misspent days. So few of us appreciate life at its true value until it has come to the sere and yellow leaf. We sell golden hours for a mess of pottage. We neglect the seed time and therefore reap a scanty harvest. By many indiscretions and excesses we are laying up for ourselves trouble and pain in the years to come. Our sins against the body find us out and demand retribution just as surely as our sins against the soul. "Behold, God is not mocked."

"We all do fade as a leaf." That is the one thing that is certain to happen to everyone. The black camel kneels at every gate. But to the man of true faith and a godly life there is no terror in advancing years. He looks upon the falling leaf and knows that the death of the present will issue in another resurrection when the spring sun shines. He looks upon the beautiful world in which he lives, but he knows that it is only the antechamber to the throne-room of the King. He looks toward the sunset and lies down to rest, knowing that he shall awake when a more glorious sunrise gilds the hilltops.

No one can look upon the earth with its aspects of beauty and its changing seasons without seeing the love and care of God everywhere. But it is even more evident in your life. God cares for you—therefore in the wild night of storm He shall come walking upon the waves, to bid the storm cease. God cares for you—therefore His whole kingdom of love yearns and waits for your homecoming. And he who is sheltered within the heart of God has found a peace-chamber where he can retreat from the pursuit of worldly jealousy, ambition and strife. The darker the night and the louder the tempest, so much the more are the security and the blessed peace.



# The City Eternal

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He looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and Maker is God.—  
Heb. xi: 10.

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**N**O man-built city is permanent. Babylon of old had great stone walls fifteen miles square and eighty-seven feet thick, but it passed away and we are digging its ancient palaces from under the ground. Rock walls crumble to the dust, and even the mountains wear away by the action of wind and weather. Ancient men of power and insight saw the decay and transiency of all things and they longed for something that should abide. They built their cities on the rock-ribbed hills, but the tooth of time gnawed at their portals and the enemy came and pulled down their walls. Man felt within himself something which rebelled against the transiency of all things material, something which cried out for what is permanent, eternal. So ancient men of faith looked for a city whose architect was God, built of material which time could not crumble.

Now, note that only spiritual things last, such as faith and love and good deeds. Abraham had faith in God long before we laid the foundations of our cities. Love ruled the world before our mountains were chiseled into shape, and before the river flowed through the valley. The memory and influence of a great and good deed shall remain, when the monument raised to commemorate it has crumbled to dust. Only spiritual things are permanent.

Then the City Eternal must be spiritual. We have heard and read much speculation as to what sort of a place heaven is, as to what sort of a city it was for which Abraham looked. But you are not interested in what I may imagine about it, nor am I interested in what you may imagine about it, but we are both interested in what God has to say about it. In this work-a-day-world it should help us to bear our burdens more bravely, and help us to holier living if we also were looking for a city whose builder and maker is God.

Heaven then, is a place of incomparable beauty. The God of the Bible is a God of beauty. The God of nature is a God of beauty. The greatest artist has never imagined or spread upon canvas anything which is not far surpassed in beauty in this world which He made. It is true that the beauty of creation has been marred to us by sin. Our every faculty has been blunted and stunted. The weed, the thorn, and the brier spring up, the insect devours the rose, and death and decay bring loathesome sights. But in heaven will be the perfection of beauty, where all earthly comparisons fail. Some of us have seen beautiful visions upon earth. We have seen mountains rearing their snow-crowned heads above the clouds; we have seen the vista of rolling hills and verdant valleys; we have seen the heavens bejeweled with their countless stars; we have caught the odors that float through the summer night in park and garden. But all these are but faint shadows of the beauty that shall inhabit that City of God.

But far more important, heaven will be a place of ennobling and holy companionships. The best and the wisest, the purest and noblest



## The City Eternal

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and most unselfish of all ages will be there. All who have trusted in the atoning blood of Christ. All the dear ones who have loved their Lord. There are many who strive with all their might to get into the best society on earth, and that is all right if it really be the best society, and not merely the society of wealth and fashion and foolishness. But the best society of this world will be nothing to the best society of the heaven. Eternity shall be passed in the presence of God and of the Master. "I go to prepare a place for you," He said, "that where I am there ye may be also." To St. Paul this was one of the most attractive thoughts about heaven.

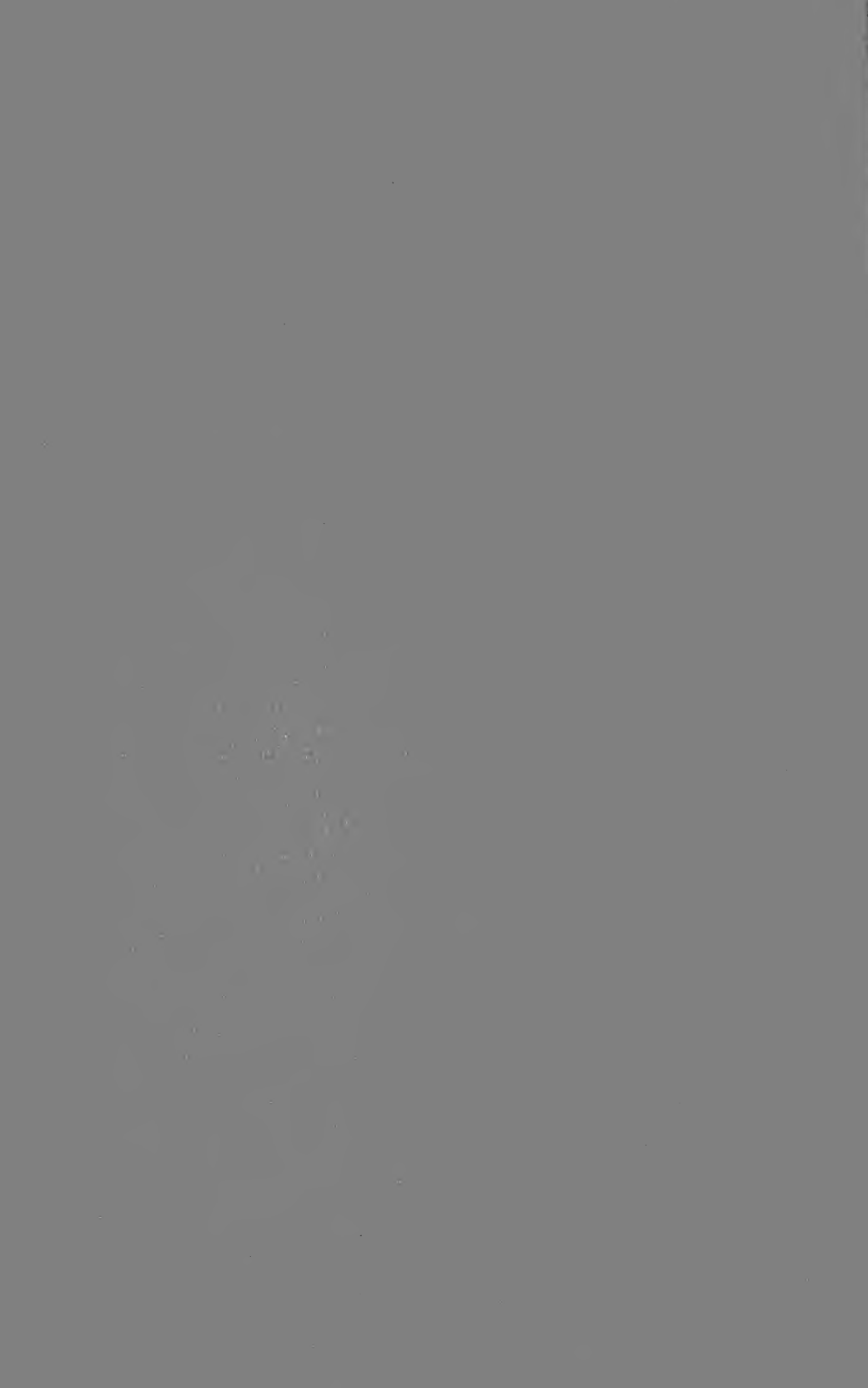
On the other hand there will be no unpleasant or degrading companionships there. The lewd, the vulgar and the obscene will not be there. The avaricious and the selfish will not be there. The slanderer the backbiter, the hypocrite, the profane scoffer, the infidel will not be there. No money nor influence nor cunning will get them in. "There shall in no wise enter anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie." (Rev. xxi:27). But it shall be a place of happy reunions. There shall we meet again the children who were removed from us in the beauty of their early life, and whom we have never forgotten through all the years that have passed.

Heaven will be free from everything which curses and mars our life here. There will be no sin, no sickness, no pain, no poverty, no want, no death. There will be no sin, for everyone will obey the perfect will of God. No poverty, for we shall be "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." No grinding toil. When we see men and women and even little children toil from morning till night beyond their strength, day after day, year after year, crushing all ambition and joy out of their bodies and souls, we rejoice and thank God that there is a place where the weary are at rest. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things have passed away." (Rev. xxi:4). No more pain or sickness, no more nights of anxious watching, no more sights that wring our hearts with pity. No deaths; no funerals passing through the streets, no cry of the mourner, no yawning grave waiting for its tenant. No death in the presence of the Prince of Life.

Heaven will be a place of perfect knowledge. "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." Now we know in part, but our knowledge is faulty and limited. We are children in understanding. But there, doubts and errors shall pass away and faith shall be swallowed up in sight.

And heaven will be a place of perfect love. "We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." (I John iii:2). We shall be like Him, and He is love. How happy is the home where love is triumphant. It may be a lowly home, but it is the happiest place which our earth knows. Heaven is the home of eternal and perfect love. And it is an eternal city, for its maker and builder is God.











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